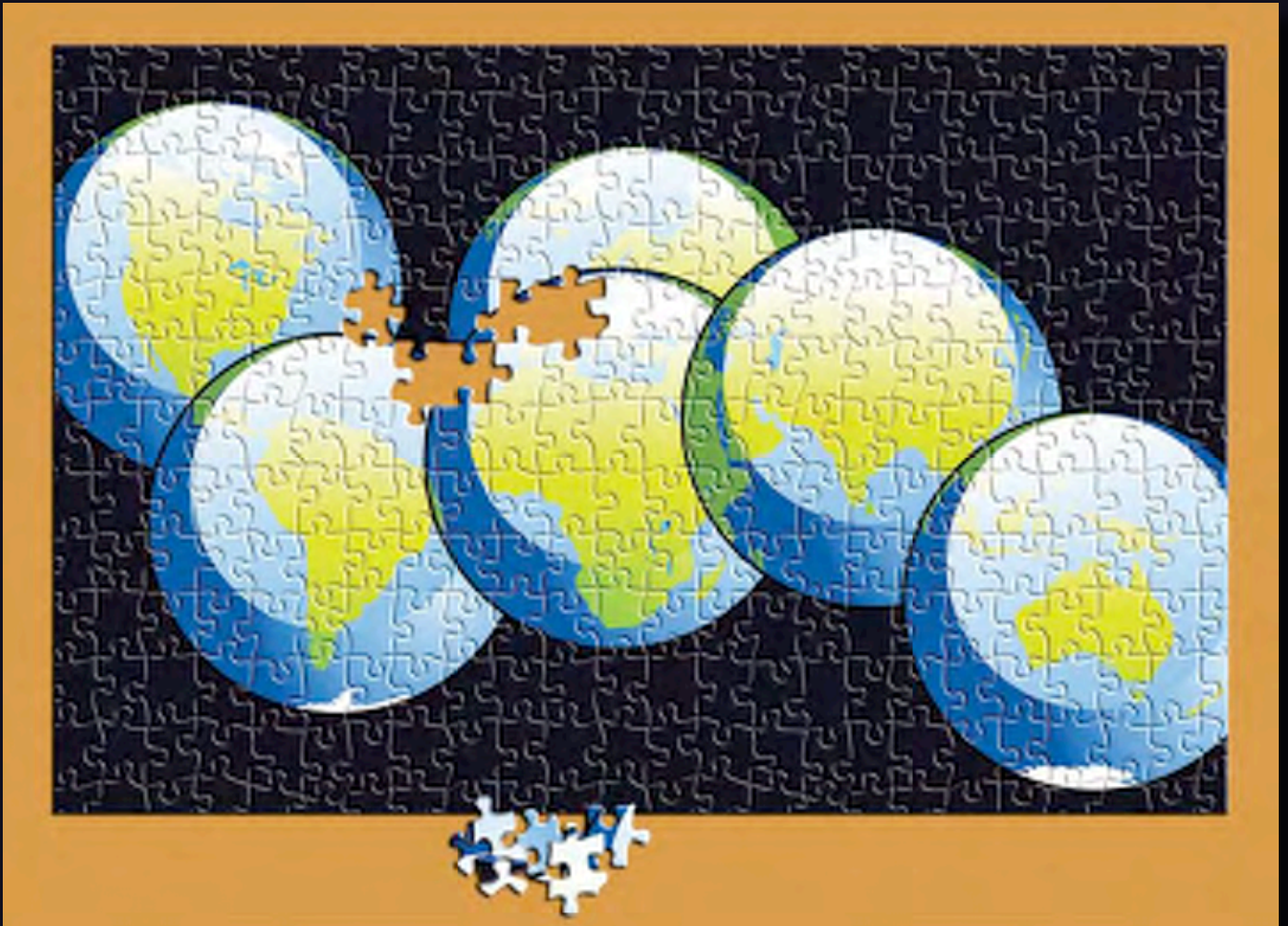


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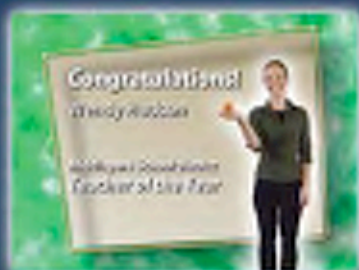


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As the journal of the Alliance for Community Media, Community Media Review shall support the Alliance mission by providing: a comprehensive overview of past, present and future issues critical to the Alliance and its membership; vigorous and thoughtful debate on those issues; and a venue for members and like-minded groups to present issues critical to the Alliance.

What's the WSIS

by Anthony Riddle



Anthony Riddle is the executive director of the Alliance for Community Media.

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with parallel meetings of governments and civil society. Government participants might include heads of state and diplomats, while civil society participants might include citizen-based organizations, nonprofits and grassroots groups.

Security at the Geneva summit was intense – provided by the Swiss army. Stern young men with black machine guns. Photo-ID passes with RFID chips. Checkpoints established for people moving from one section to another. It was in passing these checkpoints that, several times, I ran into Dirk Koning or DeeDee Halleck, each rushing from workshops to meetings.

First day clothing was mostly black, dark gray or green. However, as the days passed, folks broke out into native dress. I saw one regal Tuareg wrapped in white and the most beautiful radiant blues standing in silence, completely covered but for his eyes, nose and cheeks. Samoans invoked a powerful Hula in one corner, their drums slowly blending from a native beat into *By the Waters of Babylon*.

In his speech, Kofi Annan paid special attention to the need to involve women and girls in the sciences. It strikes me that Secretary General Annan and many others are using the same language and models that we promote through the Alliance: Community centers... community based media. ICT4D (Information and Communications Technology for Development) in rural areas. Promotion of people over technology.

The WSIS seeks to determine what ought to be the proper relationship between communications technology and societies. It is an attempt to declare the basic goals and rights of societies in an information age. It does so through two main tracks – governmental and civil society.

I WAS NOT ABLE TO GO to the World Summit On the Information Society (WSIS) conference last year in Tunis, but went to the one in Geneva in 2003. It was a tremendous learning experience and informs my thoughts about our Alliance today.

WSIS summits are organized by the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union. WSIS summits are the first UN world summits to be set up in an egalitarian format,

In Geneva, the governmental declaration recognized the power and needs of states in the information age, but was heavily influenced by large transnational corporate communications firms. Industrialized countries demanded language be inserted into the governmental document: "Societies should have access to the most competitive systems available." The international financial sector was able to demand changes in a social document. They preempted any ideas not based solely on the desire to increase private profits. Their representatives eliminated terms such as *developing country* from the final document, fearing that developing implied resources flowing from richer countries to poorer.

By contrast, the declaration of the civil society document was worked out in separate interest group meetings: human rights, indigenous peoples, women, media, internet governance, and even community media. Each group developed its own set of principles and goals which came together in one document.

Most unusual, is that the WSIS published the civil society document exactly parallel to the governmental document, giving it equal weight. The civil society document benefits from the open, transparent and egalitarian structure of its construction. It carries a moral, universal weight of vastly more meaning than the self-interest of corporations.

It was clear that the developed countries were highly influenced by financial interests. Their exhibitions in the trade show were dominated by companies with technical knowledge and services to sell. Throughout the conference, this financial advantage was used to make southern and developing societies sign onto official documents counter to their national will.

In less-developed countries, government is often the only party with enough resources to make a difference, and tends to be more responsive to community needs. Their booths overflowed with technology used for education and inclusion – particularly for the development of women and girls. Many projects made creative use of low-end technology to improve delivery of services. Some actually uttered the goal of universal service as a shared expense for the country. Many projects involved protection of indigenous cultures and unified national identities. Economic development, particularly in rural areas, used technology for micro-businesses or for support of traditional businesses, such as agricultural marketing.

And, many less-developed countries are leap-frogging western technical development. Wireless communications development now occurs in place of land lines.

And, as at an Alliance conference, the grassroots tract

brought people together in commonality and offered a chance for sharing examples — an energizing opportunity for international networking.

We need more of this in our own conferences and in our day-to-day activities. We must link to international movements, particularly those in less-developed countries. Their technical goals are often closer to ours than are commercial operators in our own country. Together, we can promote a philosophy and models which favor the development of strong communities. We need a plan to build strategic coalitions between favorable governments and civil society organizations in order to build community media in our own countries and through the UN development agencies.

This should be a multi-track strategy. First, we organize politically outside of the UN and other sanctioned bodies. This political constituency is what gives us the possibility of being heard. It is an army of educators.

The second track is technology-based. Community media advocates should specialize in support of media which is community controlled, scalable to low finance, and which operates within its own framework of values and equipment.

We must prepare people to operate their own media, media which can continue to operate whether sanctioned, ignored or attacked by other institutions.

The community media movement must be prepared, at some point, to act internationally to prevent the subjugation

of communication rights by state or business interests. Repression of community controlled media is a virus which can spread quickly from one country to another if we do not organize internationally.

The Alliance has not lately taken the lead in building these relations. It is not clear we feel we have the right or need to move this to the next level. The Alliance no longer has a formal structure to support our international connections, for example. We eliminated the International Committee from the national board several years ago. This was the wrong direction for our times.

How many of us stream or archive our programs online? We may do this locally, for local reasons, but who else can see these? How many programs from our centers are replayed overseas? How many of the programs we play come from abroad? Are we aware how our audiences may be expanding? Do we have any choice but to be international in our view?

The Alliance board of directors should reestablish an international seat on the board as part of the regional representation. We need to be pro-active in our international connections. We need to rejoin our relatives. We need to step forward as the representatives of all that America is meant to be.

When we do, not only will others learn from us, but we will learn so much from them. **cMr**

From the Board Chair

Are You Lonesome Tonight?

by *Mike Wassenaar*

IT'S GOOD TO KNOW you're not alone when you feel up against the wall in any kind of fight.

For people involved with community media centers and access television across the United States, fighting for access to information, access to democratic media, and access to knowledge for our communities can sometimes make you feel like you're in a lonely place.

So it's good to know that struggle to make information available to communities is a fight that's happening around the world.

Working in the Midwest, I hear from small communities that are fighting to preserve local culture and local community production capacity, in geographic areas that East and West Coasters sometimes refer to as "flyover zones." Many of those small access centers are fighting to preserve culture, knowledge and community in what are

increasingly "cultural flyover zones," areas where mass culture is increasingly coming from someplace else, on terms and subjects defined by someone else.

I would venture that struggle to preserve local culture in the media landscape of rural Nebraska or Wisconsin is not that different from the struggle that goes on in communities all over the world. In some cases, the fight is for local identity. In others, it's about having a stake in the creative economies that are driving innovation in the 21st Century.

The struggle to preserve community rights in the franchise battle in the U.S. is part of a continuum of contests worldwide, over copyright, cultural production, free and democratic monitoring of government activity, and a host of other areas involving public information and knowledge.

Take heart that you and your community are not alone. Welcome to the world. **cMr**



Mike Wassenaar is the executive director of Saint Paul Neighborhood Network, and is the chair of the national board of the Alliance for Community Media.

Mike can be reached at wassenaar@spnn.org

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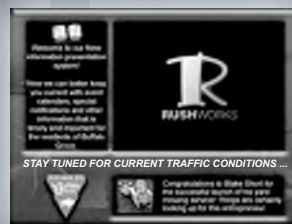
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Community Media: Global Policies, Global Connections

by *Diana Agosta*

I LIVED FOR A YEAR IN EL SALVADOR, doing research on community radios in poor rural and urban villages. I found that their goals were in many ways the same as the public access TV centers I knew from New York: the radios were constantly trying to find ways to work with those who most needed them – the health clinic, agricultural specialists, women's groups, religious groups, youth. Like the community media centers I worked with in New York, we had to make sure our services were reaching all our producers and audiences in relevant and accessible ways. We also had to respond to the danger that national regulators and legislators would do away with community media. These two goals are connected, and that is the theme underlying this issue of CMR.

This issue is about how community media activists are facing policy challenges – directly, through declarations, meetings and negotiation, and indirectly through the innovative ways our fellow community media centers are operating – as well as how we are keeping in touch with our counterparts around the world.

Even though the places, languages, and specifics are different, in many ways, the challenges we face here in the U.S. parallel those faced by our colleagues around the world. Our struggles are significant: to protect PEG channels and services as cable, internet and phone service ownership and technologies converge; to keep internet access democratic; to open old and new spaces, like low power radio and audio/video blogs; and to control our intellectual property for democratic communication and expression. These are the same fundamental issues as those debated in other parts of the world – the rights of all peoples to communicate freely using the prevalent media and communications tools of their times and places.

In the developing world, media is consid-

ered a tool for basic survival because of the profound marginalization that comes from lack of communication, information, and education. We know this from our own communities; this is the significance of the “digital divide.” Many of our community television centers are already expanding to become community media centers, combining training and access for the internet, multimedia, or community radio. Community media centers around the world have chosen different ways to provide these tools. So as we re-evaluate what we're doing and how we're doing it, these examples can both remind us of our mission for social change and media democracy, and inform our strategies and next steps.

In periods of technological and political change, policy frameworks must also change. We are in the midst of such a period, both nationally and on a global scale. These policy changes will affect our ability to communicate with each other for decades as the technologies continue to develop.

Two themes wind through the articles in this issue. One is that the media of choice on a global scale are radio and internet, despite the directness and attractiveness of visual media like video. Using tools that are most accessible, effective and cheap, makes sense if our movement is fundamentally about communication for social benefit. Second, we have a lot to learn from our fellow community media activists, and there are many models to fit the range of conditions and needs around the world. As much as we have to offer our colleagues in other part of the world with our solidarity and resources, we are not necessarily the sole model to follow. When it comes to the basics of serving our mission, the U.S. community media movement can learn from the lessons of the global effort. (Probably a good lesson for Americans for a lot of issues.) **CMR**



Diana Agosta is currently a freelance film researcher and evaluation consultant, while she searches for a job that makes use of her Ph.D in anthropology (City University of New York) and experience as a community media producer. She is also a former board member of Manhattan Neighborhood Network, and the mother of a six-year old boy.

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Special thanks to Marshall Parker who helped with the initial stages of organizing this issue.

Section I. The World Summit on the Information Society

A. WHAT IS THE WSIS AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

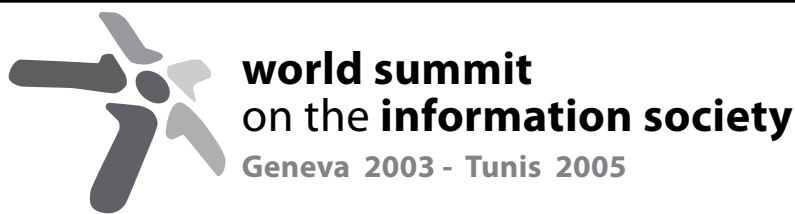
HERE IN THE U.S., accelerating media concentration and consolidation across technologies have been reducing the diversity of voices and perspectives we hear despite the proliferation of channels and platforms. Around the world,

tion clashes in 1999. At the WSIS, finally, we gained a foot in the door. Participants like us are referred to as “civil society” – people’s or citizens’ organizations, mostly nonprofit, some grassroots, that are not affiliated with governments or corporations. More than 19,000 people from 174 countries attended the WSIS meetings and related events, mostly to address the future of internet access and regulation. Many organizations and individuals took part, including leaders from the Alliance.

The WSIS meetings were held in Geneva, Switzerland in 2003 and Tunis, Tunisia in 2005. Since 2005, working groups have continued to discuss ways to implement the summit’s plans. In addition, the WSIS meetings were a catalyst for ongoing civil society networking on global communications issues, such as the formation of the Communication Rights for the Information Society (CRIS) (See Citizen and Media Activist Organizations, page 25.)

What relevance does this have for us in the U.S.? One issue debated at the WSIS was the way in which the internet is regulated, beginning with the way internet addresses are assigned. Since our communications capacities are increasingly based on the internet, internet regulation will deeply affect our work. Another issue debated at the WSIS was who owns programming and who owns culture? Principles for international intellectual property agreements were another hotly contested topic at the summit. And a central theme was what kinds of actions were needed to make sure that the digital divide will continue to shrink.

The Summit developed plans to address these issues in a number of areas. One recommendation by the WSIS particularly relevant to us is a plan to support a global network of community media centers (CMCs) to make sure that all people have at least collective access to the internet by 2015 – one of the plan’s central goals. These



Official logo of WSIS

the same processes of media consolidation are occurring across a landscape of huge disparities where access to media and communications tools ranges from saturated to scarce. Radio remains the most accessible medium, because it is so inexpensive and technologically simple. Access to the internet is becoming increasingly crucial as well, for commerce, news and information, keeping in touch with people, political advocacy, and entertainment. Some progress has been made in increasing people’s access to the internet, both within the U.S. and around the world. But the digital divide is still substantial.

To address this digital divide, and focus debate on needed changes in media policy and support, the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union organized the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). In most world meetings organized by major international institutions, the main players have been governments. Here, for the first time, organizations representing citizens and grassroots interests were able to participate.

Broadening participation to include grassroots interests was, in part, a response to the strong presence by social movements outside of global meetings since the Seattle World Trade Organiza-

CMCs offer a global strategy for addressing the digital divide in even the poorest communities, recognizing that access to information, communication and expression is a basic tool for improving lives, as well as a platform for social and economic development. These centers are based on community radio, not cable access television, with initiatives to link internet ac-

cess to radio. Community radio is more ubiquitous, cheaper, easier to learn, more practical. The establishment of CMCs is a strong statement of the value, globally, of community-based media initiatives.

Section I focuses on the WSIS from its genesis to completion, and the effect it continues to exert on communications policy across the globe. **cMr**

What is the World Summit on the Information Society?

by Saskia Fischer

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2005

THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS) is an international gathering organized by the United Nations, and follows other summits on overarching themes like the Rio Summit on the environment and development. The central themes of the WSIS are communication and information. The first part of the summit was held in December 2003 in Geneva, and its goal was to define the primary steps for establishing an “information society for all” in the PRINCIPLES AND PLAN OF ACTION. Phase two will take place in Tunis from 16-18 November, and its primary focus is on developing concrete mechanisms for implementing the Plan of Action. In between the two summits, numerous “Prepcoms” have been held around the world. Much of the work of defining and negotiating goals and mechanisms has taken place during these meetings.

One important difference between this and previous UN Summits is the “multi-stakeholder” approach that has been adopted. This framework expands participation in the summit to include civil society and business groups, as well as governments who continue to have primary decision-making (and veto) power.

What are the goals of the summit?

The summit’s objectives vary depending on who you’re talking to; governments, business and civil society organizations have different goals and expectations for the process. In addition, governments in the North, where many of the resources and IT industries are concentrated, generally have different goals from those in the

South, whose primary concerns are with development and getting access to communications resources.

However, the Geneva “Plan of Action” states as some of the principal goals:

- an understanding that the equitable, affordable and accessible distribution of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is central to the goal of an inclusive information society;
- Universal Access both to infrastructure and the skills to make full use of ICTs;
- a respect for cultural and linguistic diversity;
- a closing of the digital divide globally.

What role are civil society organizations playing?

After the first summit in Geneva, civil society organizations were not satisfied with the “Plan of Action” and issued their own statement: “Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs.” This document highlighted a number of critical themes either ignored or downplayed in the official document. These centered on the relationship between development, social justice and human rights, and access to and control over information technologies. Over the past two years, civil society organizations around the world have been working both within and outside of the official process to further this agenda of an equitable, just, and open global information order. **cMr**

Saskia Fischer is a former staff member of United Church of Christ News, Office of Communications. This article is excerpted from her WSIS blog for UCC News. The full article appears at news.ucc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=375&Itemid=57

WSIS Background Resources

- Official UN site: www.itu.int/wsis/index.html
- A good resource with background info and news: www.worldsummit2003.org
- Civil Society at WSIS: www.wsis-cs.org

Globalizing Media Democracy

by John Downing

John Downing is the director of the Global Media Research Center and professor of International Communication at Southern Illinois University. **Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements** (Sage Publications, 2001) is perhaps his most well-known book.

“The ongoing movement for media reform in the USA – media reform in the broadest sense, addressing net neutrality, copyleft, surveillance and privacy, digital exclusion, as well as corporate media concentration – is very far from being a purely U.S. phenomenon.”

THE ONGOING MOVEMENT for media reform in the U.S. – media reform in the broadest sense, addressing net neutrality, copyleft, surveillance and privacy, digital exclusion, as well as corporate media concentration – is very far from being a purely U.S. phenomenon. So too, media activist and media literacy movements are in growing evidence elsewhere. What is going on in the U.S. has a particular weight at this point in history, simply because of the capacity of the U.S. corporate regime to push other nations, especially smaller and poorer ones, into compliance with its communication regulations and laws. But our efforts are far from ours alone.

A truly global example is provided by the debates and citizen energy around the two World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS), in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005). These addressed, even if often very unsatisfactorily, the issues listed above. Nonetheless, this was the first time ever in the course of global information policy summits, that the public had some access and voice. In the old series of World Administrative Radio Conferences, which were held every few years to reallocate chunks of the planet’s frequency spectrum, only the world’s states were allowed to play originally. More recently – surprise, surprise – corporations were allowed in to the game as official representatives along with governments. But for citizens’ groups to be allowed at the WSIS, albeit very grudgingly and partially, represents a first-time toehold.

Of course, getting there was expensive for people without corporate or government funding, and so participation by citizens could in no way be fully representative. As in the history of all major movements for social justice – to emancipate women, end slavery, pass labor laws, and much else besides – it’s been a hard, slow, and partial grind and none of those stories is over yet. So, this was one real step forward.

Out of the two WSIS events, there is yet another weird little lower case acronym that has emerged, “WGIG” (Working Group on Internet Governance). Easy to txt, but what does it mean? It was the name of a group that put forward a series of proposals before and at the Tunis WSIS conference, concerning how the internet should be organized.

This can all seem pretty remote from what’s for lunch, but bear with me. Right now, in the name of protecting individuals’ rights, the internet governance body that the U.S. government backs is a private entity licensed in California, named Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). This U.S.-centered arrangement, which nicely suits Google, Microsoft, Lexis-Nexis, the National Security Agency, and other huge players, was challenged by the WGIG. It argued for a globally democratic approach, splitting ICANN’s functions into three: a technical operation; a policy body; and an ongoing debating e-chamber. The U.S. refused, and continued to proclaim its sanctimonious protection of individual rights, just as in its rendition procedures and at Guantanamo and indeed in every U.S. prison. The argument matters, acronyms or no acronyms.

Lastly, around the world there is also a growing number of media reform, independent media, and media literacy movements. In Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Slovenia, South Korea, Germany, India, Canada, Australia and other countries – taking varying forms in different places – the drive to make media public in the broadest sense is alive and well. So is attention to many elements in the raft of other communication policy issues listed above. There are huge obstacles to surmount before global communication is democratized. But none of us is alone. And we can learn from each other as well as support each other. **cMr**

Communication Rights Before and After the WSIS

by Andrew Calabrese

THE UNITED NATIONS World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which met in Geneva in 2003 and culminated in Tunis in 2005, was widely understood to be a process meant to welcome and respond to broad participation in building a global consensus about the necessary conditions for a just world information society. The WSIS process represents for many people throughout the world, particularly in the global South, new hope for making important progress in articulating global norms in the area of communication rights. A broad range of issues was brought to the WSIS in the CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION to the WSIS, drafted by the citizens' organizations and groups that participated in the WSIS meetings¹. These issues include: the communication rights of indigenous groups, workers, women, children, and persons with disabilities; intellectual property; community media; open source software; access to information and the means of communication; and global citizenship. One ongoing challenge of this process is whether the power of networking that has enabled this coalition to claim a legitimate space in the WSIS process will be a kind of power that can continue to offer a platform for diverse voices to be heard and heeded now that the summit is over.

How novel is the current movement for communication rights? Progressive movements for democratizing the means of communication are not a recent phenomenon, nor is the idea of democratizing access to communication policy forums unique to the push for access to the WSIS. Marc Raboy, a noted media scholar, has written about a thread of aspiration that links the communication rights provisions in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)², the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)³, and the current campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS).⁴ He argues that the UDHR and the NWICO are both flawed by their "exclusive reliance

on states and governments as the only legitimate political actors," whereas the participation of civil society groups in the WSIS marks a turning point:

The WSIS is the first UN summit where civil society was officially invited to be a participating partner⁵

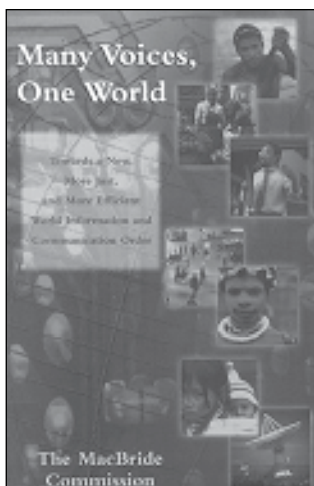
But there are many similarities between the WSIS process and these earlier efforts.

The most influential publication of the New World Information and Communication Order was the MacBride Report.⁶ The report – entitled MANY VOICES, ONE WORLD – was published in 1980 by UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems. Although concerned mainly with intervention at the level of the nation-state, this report focused on communication as a basic need for development. It is fundamentally about the right to communicate: by our humanity, and as citizens of the world, it is our birthright and our duty to speak, to write, to read, listen and watch, to assemble and to associate as a means to better understand one another and our shared and separate histories, needs and interests. It was in the spirit of a strong belief in such a right that the MacBride Report was commissioned, its charge being to elaborate on what that right can and should mean in a world that had begun to see dramatic changes in the means of communication.

The MacBride Report was written in a much different global context than we witness today. When it was published in 1980, the Cold War had a pronounced influence on geopolitical alliances, and the choice of many governments to be identified as "non-aligned" was in

Andrew Calabrese is a professor of media studies at the University of Colorado. His articles and books focus on communication politics and policy. He won the McGannon Award for Communication Policy Research and was a Fulbright scholar in Slovenia. He edits the book series **Critical Media Studies: Institutions, Politics and Culture**, for Rowman and Littlefield, which recently re-published the MacBride Report in commemoration of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

“The WSIS process represents for many people throughout the world, particularly in the global South, new hope for making important progress in articulating global norms in the area of communication rights.”



Cover of *Many Voices, One World*, the 1980 MacBride Report

reference to this great polarity. But few observers or leaders at the time foresaw the time or shape of the Cold War's imminent end. Not surprisingly, the struggles to democratize countries of Central and Eastern Europe – what some called the rebirth of civil society – placed great emphasis on the freedoms of speech and of the press, especially the right to criticize those in power, to closely examine the actions of political leaders and to report those actions to the world. The aim was to remove political power from the confines of secrecy and concealment, and to make it a subject of public accountability.

Some of the most visible struggles were for control over newspapers and broadcasting channels, the lifeblood of democratic expression the world over.

In the years 1989 and 1990, citizens of the world watched, listened, and read while their brothers and sisters defied their governments and claimed the right to communicate as a basic means of democratic self-governance. For example, when the MacBride Report was first published, South Africa was a very different place, wracked by bloodshed and widespread suffering because of a form of institutionalized racism that denied basic freedoms – to vote, to criticize, to assemble – to most of the country's people. When apartheid was officially ended in 1990, much improved for South Africa's citizens, although it does not mean that the struggle for democracy has ended there. But such historic moments have been inspiring because they signify for all of humanity an irrepressible spirit that demands transparency and accountability from political leaders, a spirit that also insists on democratic controls over the means of communication.

Today, the modern means of communication have become the infrastruc-

ture that has made possible a new global market system and a new context for the spread of political, economic and cultural ideas, including the greater capacity for citizens of the world to bear witness to and fight against violations of human rights, wherever they may happen. But alongside the many positive changes are the perils that must be avoided, not least of which are the uses of these new means of communication by some to violate the dignity and humanity of others through public deception, economic exploitation, political surveillance and repression, and other abuses of power.

“The progress that we have seen over the nearly 25 years that have elapsed between the time of the MacBride Report and the WSIS II in Tunisia in 2005, is a remarkable testimony to the promise of civil society as a democratic ‘system of needs.’”

In many ways the aspirations articulated in the 2003 CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION are not so different from previous attempts. Participants in the drafting of the declaration sought to gain influence in the global governance of media policy in the name of democratic communication. In 2003, the CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION to the WSIS presented

the need for communication as its central organizing principle:

We reaffirm that communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and a foundation of all social organizations. Everyone, everywhere, at any time should have the opportunity to participate in communication processes and no one should be excluded from their benefits.

The progress that we have seen over the nearly 25 years that have elapsed between the time of the MacBride Report and the WSIS II in Tunisia in 2005, is a remarkable testimony to the promise of civil society as a democratic “system of needs.” A democratic global civil society is a promise, not a given, and the global movement for the democratization of communication is a central struggle in that long revolution. cMR

Notes

1. **Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs**, Civil Society Declaration, 2003

This declaration was drafted in 2003 when civil society participants concluded that the official Geneva documents did not take into account their concerns and perspectives – that gender and other social and economic inequalities were not adequately addressed in the plans, that our societies' common heritage of knowledge, information and communication resources were not adequately protected from privatization and further inequality, and that participation of individual citizens, their organizations and communities in decision making about communication policies was not strongly enough supported. The declaration also highlighted community media centers as one viable solution for making information and communication resources more broadly accessible.

View a copy of the Civil Society Declaration at www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/civil-society-declaration.pdf

2. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, 1948

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the cornerstone of most visionary statements of the social purpose of media and cultural expression.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Since then, the U.N. has adopted additional statements on particular issues of concern such as race, children's and migrant workers' rights. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland. See www.un.org/Overview/rights.html or www.unhcr.ch/udhr/index.htm

3. **New World Information and Communications Order**, late 1970s-1980s

NWICO is a term that was coined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in a debate over global inequalities in media resources and criticisms of media representations of the developing world. It initially emerged from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) of smaller countries not affiliated with either the United States or the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

4. **CRIS Campaign**, 2001

Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) is a civil society-based campaign formed to add the voice of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the international media and communications debate in the World Summits on the Information Society. CRIS started in 2001 and was initially based in Great Britain. CRIS-USA was established in 2004 to work on these issues in the United States while maintaining an international consciousness. CRIS activists emphasize four themes: 1) creating spaces for democratic media environments; 2) reclaiming the use of knowledge and the public domain through copyright activism; 3) reclaiming civil and political rights in the information society; and 4) securing equitable and affordable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs). www.crisinfo.org

5. Raboy, 2004, p 349.

6. **McBride Report, Many Voices, One World**, 1980

This is the summary report of the McBride Commission (International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems). The Commission was created by UNESCO in 1978 to investigate issues raised by the NWICO debates, and proposes solutions through UNESCO actions and other international programs and agreements. While the report had strong international support, it was condemned by the United States and Great Britain as an attack on the freedom of the press, and both countries withdrew from UNESCO in protest in 1984 and 1985, respectively (and later rejoined in 2003 and 1997, respectively) (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McBride_report). The McBride Report was reprinted in 2004 (see sidebar).

Suggested Reading

Andrew Calabrese (2004). **The Promise of Civil Society: A Global Movement for Communication Rights**. Continuum, Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, 18(3), 317-329.

Andrew Calabrese (2005). **Communication, Global Justice and the Moral Economy**. Global Media and Communication, 1(3), 301-315.

Civil Society Declaration to the World Summit on the Information Society, Shaping Information Societies for Human Needs, (2003, Geneva). Available at: www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/civil-society-declaration.pdf

MacBride Commission (2004). **Many Voices, One World: Towards a new, more just and more efficient world information and communication order** (twenty-fifth anniversary edition of the "MacBride Report"). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Marc Raboy (2004). **The WSIS as a political space in global media governance**. Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies, 18(3), 345-359.

Marc Raboy and Norman Landry (2005). **Civil Society, Communication And Global Governance: Issues from the World Summit on the Information Society**. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

B. PERSPECTIVES FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC MEDIA ACTIVISTS

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE SECOND (TUNIS) PHASE was to put Geneva's Plan of Action into motion as well as to find solutions and reach agreements in the fields of internet governance, financing mechanisms, and follow-up and implementation of the Geneva and Tunis documents. Representatives from 174 countries as well as from international organizations, the private sector, and civil society adopted the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. These documents mostly reaffirmed the principles and plans laid out in the Geneva documents. In addition, the civil society participants organized a parallel set of meetings and presentations; however some of this agenda was blocked or obstructed by the host country's security forces. Follow-up on these commitments is discussed below. **cMr**

Towards Tunis

by Steve Buckley

[The following article was written in anticipation of the challenges of the Tunis round of the WSIS.]

Steve Buckley is the president of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). The article is excerpted from an article which originally appeared in AMARC's magazine, **InterRadio**. The full article is available online at interadio.amarc.org/012/01/interadio-12-01-04-EN.html

Thanks to AMARC for allowing us to reprint excerpts from this article
www.amarc.org

IN DECEMBER 2003, Geneva played host to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a United Nations intergovernmental conference in two stages. For civil society organizations, the first phase of the WSIS highlighted major fault lines in the global debate on the human communications environment.

During the Geneva phase, civil society's role was to bring critical and independent voices to the debate. The main focus of the Geneva phase was clear – a political process that would lead to a Declaration of Principles and a Plan of Action. Simultaneously, a wide range of WSIS-related activities and outcomes occurred. These included conferences, partnership-based initiatives, publications, exhibitions, counteractions and demonstrations.

For the Tunis phase, the extent and the nature of engagement are likely to be significantly different. Governments have agreed the summit should lead to a “political and operational statement... to reaffirm and enhance commitments undertaken in the Geneva phase.”

At the same time, the expectation is that Tunis will provide a less supportive environment for civil society groups. Human rights violations are commonplace in Tunisia, and media groups have been particu-

larly concerned with Tunisia's poor record on freedom of expression. Activists may well be in a defensive role with regard to the Geneva stage commitments to human rights.

In the meantime, community media activists have established a WSIS Working Group to press for recognition of the vital importance of community media in the “Information Society.” It has been a difficult struggle with opposition coming not only from authoritarian governments but also from certain governments where commercial broadcasters have excessive influence. El Salvador in particular has consistently moved to veto inclusion of the words “community media” – not surprising when the president of the country is a commercial radio proprietor.

Activism in action


Perhaps the most positive outcome of the WSIS process has been the growing links between a wide range of communication rights organisations in what may come to be seen as the birth of a movement. Together, our priority must be to reaffirm and enhance the commitments made in the Geneva phase by building an alternative agenda to the WSIS – a Communication Rights Agenda.

This approach will require a commitment to sustained partnership. Building on the principles and priorities articulated in the Civil Society Declaration of the

Geneva phase, its focus must be on building knowledge, networks, advocacy and activism in the communications field. It will require working within and without the WSIS, including engaging with other critical spaces of debate on global communications policy and practice. Some of the headline issues include media diversity, freedom of expression, internet rights, privacy and surveillance, public domain and information property, and financing of communications for development.

Beside the WSIS, activists organizing around the Communication Rights Agenda should seek to identify and highlight other spaces of engagement. These include the current debates in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on information property and the public domain; work within UNESCO on a cultural diversity treaty; and defending communication rights against World Trade Organization (WTO) policies on trade.

In November 2005, there will be a convergence of communication rights activists in Tunis, and a wide range of actions, linked to or in parallel with the World Summit on the Information Society.

Under the watchful eye of the Tunisian government the official summit will talk about global information technology networks while quietly forgetting the communications divide leaves one third of the world's population out. Human rights will certainly be off the official agenda. It will be the responsibility of civil society organisations to remind governments that human rights are the rights of everyone and that sustainable development starts from the bottom-up. 

“How can we reach broader constituencies on these issues that we know are crucial – but that other social actors may not see, or see as purely technical? And how do we continue to build connections with other social actors ... given that we cannot rely on governments. And finally, how do we continue to work on other issues that have been ignored?”

*Sally Burch from CIVIL SOCIETY
CLOSING MEETINGS AND INITIAL SUMMIT
ASSESSMENTS, BLOG BY SASKIA FISCHER*

The Challenge of the Tunis Meetings

by Elizabeth Robinson

I am a lover of freedom, in solidarity with the glorious movement of October 18. I agree to hunger and no submission ... I am the representative of injury who does not bargain for human rights.

THESE ARE THE WORDS of Tunisian journalists, labor unionists, and human rights activists occasioned by a hunger strike launched by several of their members on October 18, 2005. They were protesting the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis. How, they asked, is it possible to hold meetings concerned with communications and the digital divide in a country whose government denies its citizens the most rudimentary rights to freedom of expression and association? This government has routinely filtered internet sites and imprisoned its youth for surfing the internet; it has imprisoned journal-

ists, denied them access to any kind of employment, and banished them to border regions hundreds of miles from their families. Insofar as it has offered one, “anti-terrorism” has been the Ben Ali government’s rationale.

This was the Tunis that I arrived in three days before the formal WSIS meetings began. I was there as a representative of AMARC (the French acronym for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters). We were participating in the WSIS process in order to represent the interests of community radio and to champion Article 19 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights which posits access to communications as a fundamental right.

AMARC’s president, Steve Buckley, had been a visible member of a group monitoring human rights in Tunisia in the run-up to the WSIS, so I was only a little surprised to find myself and colleagues

Elizabeth Robinson is treasurer of AMARC and a radio producer at KCSB-FM in Santa Barbara, California. She has also produced a public access television program, “Third World News Review,” and been a media activist for more than 20 years.

This article is excerpted from an article which originally appeared in **Fellowship**, a magazine published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The full article is available online at www.forusa.org/fellowship/may-june_06/ElizabethRobinson.html

Thanks to the Fellowship of Reconciliation for allowing us to reprint excerpts from this article. www.forusa.org

under surveillance and our movements restricted – bags searched every time I entered a hotel, access to meeting rooms denied, men in dark glasses at every turn.

More surprising was the discovery that most of the media covering the WSIS hadn't a clue about these conditions, even though a French journalist had been severely beaten just days earlier. They were there to cover discussions on things like internet governance, but seemed to be clueless about any local repression. After all, Tunis is a city with a very European feel, with wide boulevards, sidewalk

cafés, and young women in designer jeans *sans* veils.

By the time the meetings were to begin, a Belgian colleague had had film confiscated, a Tunisian journalist had been arrested without apparent reason, and a number of people had been pushed about in public. The situation was serious enough that we abandoned many of our activities in the meetings in order to inform the world about the hunger strikers and the conditions they were protesting. With representatives of Amnesty International, the Association for Progressive Communications, Human Rights Watch, Pen International, the CRIS campaign, and Tunisian activists, we organized a

press conference that drew more than 200 people. There, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Shirin Ebadi, Tunisian activists, and others excoriated the Ben Ali government and precipitated international reports, including our own.

Upon hearing reports, members of several European governments threatened withdrawal of economic relationships with Tunisia – and our Tunisian colleagues ventured into the street for what was the first public anti-government demonstration in many years. They have continued to receive support from abroad based on the WSIS exposé. Most recently, *Le Monde Diplomatique* filled two pages of newsprint with the story of Tunisian resistance.

This is a much abbreviated tale, but one that highlights the importance of independent media in quite dire circumstances. Control of media isn't simply about making money: it is about setting agendas, controlling populations.

Since AMARC's beginnings almost 25 years ago, its primary mission has been to create community radio at the grassroots, yet it has frequently found it necessary to intervene politically, from the local to the international level. Today, AMARC is a truly global grassroots organization, with member stations on all continents. The AMARC ideal is encompassed by the phrase "All the Voices." Our premise is the necessity of hearing many perspectives if we are to realize a more just and equitable world. **CMR**



Street demonstration in support of hunger-striking journalists, Tunis, November 2005. Read more at www.forusa.org/fellowship/may-june_06/ElizabethRobinson.html Photo courtesy of AMARC.

Community Media Telecentres

One effort that received support from the summit's sponsors was the **Community Media Telecentres Project**. UNESCO's Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) program was established in 2001. A CMC combines community radio by local people in local languages with community telecentre facilities such as computers with email and internet capacity. For example, radio hosts can search the web in response to listeners' queries and share the contents of pre-selected websites on the air.

Radio is the most accessible medium worldwide, since it is easy to learn and comparatively cheap to operate. A wide variety of programs is possible – information, edu-

cation, entertainment – and it also empowers the community by giving a strong public voice to the voiceless, encouraging greater participation in public affairs. An expansion of the program for a network of 50 CMCs in Africa was launched at the 2003 WSIS meetings, costing about one million dollars per year, and since then their numbers have continued to grow.

See the websites below for more information:

www.unesco.org/webworld/cmc

portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1263&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Latin American and Caribbean Women's Open Letter to the WSIS on Gender Equality and The Information Society

[Participants in the seminar, "Women Subverting the Exclusive Information Order," met in San José, Costa Rica, from September 24-28, 2005. At the event, which was organized by Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE), they wrote a letter addressed to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). Excerpts from this letter follow.]

THE GROWING GAP between formal rights and the full exercise of those rights has excluded from decision-making women in particular, and civil society in general. Only the consolidation of these rights will make it possible for all to achieve full citizenship.

The objectives of a democratic information society are not being achieved because:

- the voices, interests, needs and contributions of half of humanity – women – have not been included;
- knowledge has been privatized instead of shared and made available to all social sectors;
- information has become a commodity, to the detriment of the majority of the population;
- under the pretext of "world security," the right to privacy has been rendered very vulnerable;
- technological advances do not guarantee social justice, democracy, sustainable development, nor full citizenship, unless societal structures that perpetuate exclusion are transformed.

We stand for a knowledge society and communications that are free of violence, sexism, discrimination, racism and oppression, with information that is accessible and responsible to the public, and in

which child pornography is not acceptable, being a clear violation of children's rights and human dignity.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) presented a new opportunity to lay out conditions and mobilize the contributions of women and all citizens to develop more democratic information societies, in which communications reflect the expression and interaction of a diversity of voices and knowledge, and are open to the public.

However, governments have lacked the political will to take on this challenge. The measures agreed upon to close digital divides have not even included mechanisms of financing. Nor do we see commitments toward equality being translated into concrete measures, such as strengthening of women's capacities and full participation in decision making.

The voices of half of humanity will not be silenced. As women, we will continue contributing to the information and knowledge societies from our diverse perspectives and experiences, conscious of the principle of equality that inspires and motivates us. cMr

This letter was signed by the participants in the seminar, "Women Subverting the Exclusive Information Orders," San José, Costa Rica, September 28, 2005

The document is excerpted from the AMARC wiki. The full version is available online at wiki.amarc.org/action=shownews&id=561

Thanks to AMARC for allowing us to reprint excerpts from this document.



Before the WSIS Summit in 2003, there were regional meetings in each part of the world to clarify issues and needs. This slide of Ester Mudhovo, a news writer in Mozambique, is from SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES: SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE WSIS, a presentation by Tracey Naughton outlining the African preparatory meeting in 2002.

C. WSIS BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES

Who Regulates Global Media Policy?

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST of the major international organizations that are active in global policy issues. **CMR**

A major resource for these descriptions was **Global Media Governance, A Beginner's Guide**, by Seán Ó Siochrú and Bruce Girard with Amy Mahan, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

The ITU, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland is an international organization within the United Nations system where governments and the private sector coordinate global telecom networks and services. Initially established in 1865 to regulate telegraph communication, it currently has technical, policy and development functions.

www.itu.int

The World Trade Organization (WTO)

Also an agency of the United Nations, the WTO has been called the most powerful global economic institution. Its purpose is to eliminate barriers to trade between nations. In principle, this should benefit both sides, but critics say that powerful governments and corporations actually shape its agreements (called the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT) for their self-interest. WTO was established in 1995 to replace GATT, which was created in 1947.

www.wto.org

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO's purpose is to contribute to world peace by promoting international collaboration in education, science, culture, and communication. Broader than media and communication, this means its programs also aim to preserve and sustain local cultures, end illiteracy and inequality in access to education, and support scientific cooperation and communication.

www.unesco.int

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

WIPO's mission is to protect intellectual property rights, mostly through international agreements on copyrights, patents and trademarks. For some, these rights are based in the economic value for owners of particular expressions of ideas, like books, movies or inventions. Others believe that authors should control ideas which originate with them, while others believe that the public interest in sharing ideas and expressions is the basis of society and history. WIPO – which was established in 1893 – must balance these perspectives.

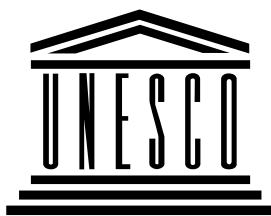
www.wipo.int

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

Based in California near Silicon Valley, ICANN is a not-for-profit corporation founded in 1998 charged with assigning names and numbers for the internet.

ICANN is one of many ways that the internet is structured and governed, and is mainly concerned with the organization of “domain” names – the endings .com, .net, .org, .gov and the country codes like .ca or .sv. This became much more complex when the internet became more privatized and commercial after its governmental and academic beginnings. The Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) established by the U.N. at the WSIS, has been meeting to suggest changes in this system. In November 2006, the U.S. Dept of Commerce took over the allocation of the profitable “.com” name and internet address allocations.

www.icann.org



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Citizens' and Media Activist Organizations Involved in the WSIS

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST of some of the civil society organizations that are active in global policy issues, or that are good sources of information about these issues. Information in these descriptions is taken from the websites of each organization and descriptions of international media reform organizations on the webpage of Free Press (www.freepress.net). **cMr**

World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC)

AMARC is an international non-governmental organization serving the community and participatory radio movement, with almost 3,000 members and associates in 110 countries spread across all continents. At AMARC's international meetings, topics range from policy to practical – international law's recognition of community media, technological challenges, programming showcases. AMARC members took an active part in advocating for recognition of community media at the WSIS, together with civil society partners, including the CRIS Campaign – Communications Rights in the Information Society. This agenda called for a human rights approach to the information society and urged recognition of the existence of communication rights as the founding base of a truly democratic Information Society.

www.amarc.org

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

The APC is an international network of civil society organisations dedicated to empowering and supporting groups and individuals working for peace, human rights, development and protection of the environment, through the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), including the internet. Though it has been officially established for 16 years, its roots can be traced back to 1985 with PeaceNet, a network of peace activists. In 1989, APC began collaborating with the United Nations for the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), more popularly known as the Earth Summit. APC is one of the best sources for news on informa-

tion and communication policy and conditions around the world.

www.apc.org

Comunica

Comunica is a network of communication researchers and activists based in Latin America. Members of Comunica participated in the WSIS meetings. Their website is an excellent source of downloads of articles, reports, books and other information about the use of new information and communication technologies by local and independent media in less developed countries, to reinforce local initiatives for development and democracy.

www.comunica.org

Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS)

CRIS is a civil society-based campaign, which formed to add the voice of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the international media and communications debate in the World Summits on the Information Society. CRIS started in 2001 and was initially based in Great Britain. CRIS-USA was established in 2004 to work on these issues in the United States while maintaining an international consciousness. CRIS activists emphasize four themes: 1) creating spaces for democratic media environments; 2) reclaiming the use of knowledge and the public domain through copyright activism; 3) reclaiming civil and political rights in the information society; and 4) securing equitable and affordable access to information and communication technologies (ICTs)

www.crisinfo.org

Free Press

Free Press is a national, nonpartisan organization working to increase informed

public participation in crucial media policy debates, and to generate policies that will produce a more competitive and public interest-oriented media system with a strong nonprofit and noncommercial sector. While many of us are familiar with its central role in U.S. media reform efforts, Free Press also covers international media policy in its clear and useful news reports.

www.freepress.net

IFEX and the Tunisia Monitoring Group (TMG)

The Tunisia Monitoring Group (TMG) is a coalition of 15 organisations that belongs to the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) network. Since 2005, the TMG has monitored free expression violations in Tunisia in order to focus attention on the country's need to improve its human rights record as the host of the World Summit on the Information Society.

www.ifex.org

International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)

IAMCR is the worldwide professional organization for media and communication academics and scholars. One section, "Community Communication," focuses on media that originates, circulates and resonates from the sphere of civil society.

www.iamcr.org

Our Media /Nuestros Medios

Our Media/Nuestros Medios is an emerging global network of scholars and practitioners, whose goal is to facilitate a long-term dialogue between academics, activists, practitioners and policy experts around citizens' media initiatives. OUR-Media/NUESTROS Medios is a useful source of information on community and participatory media events, reports and contacts.

www.ourmedianet.org

Panos IWitness

Panos is a British nonprofit whose mission is to foster sustainable development and "an enabling media and communications environment worldwide." Panos

provided background information for journalists during the WSIS. These briefing packets are still available on the Panos website.

www.panos.org.uk/iwitness/toolkit

Reporters Without Borders (RWB)

RWB's mission is to protect freedom of the press and journalists around the world by keeping the media and public opinion informed through press releases and public-awareness campaigns. While RSF's news postings focus on attacks on journalists and freedom of the press, there are also useful articles related to global media policy.

www.rsf.org

TerraViva

TerraViva is the family of independent periodicals published by Inter Press Service (IPS), a progressive global news agency. The first TerraViva newspaper was published in 1992 at the United Nations "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro, and since has reported from every major international gathering. Its flagship is the United Nations "Daily Journal," started in 1990 as a fax letter from IPS-New York. Reports from the WSIS are archived at www.ips-terraviva.net/tv/tunis/default.asp

Union for the Public Domain (UPD)

The UPD is a nonprofit citizens group whose mission is to protect and enhance the public domain in matters concerning intellectual property. Like Creative Commons, its members advocate for greater public accessibility of the world's intellectual and creative productions. The UPD website offers, among other things, short, clear descriptions of the World Intellectual Property Broadcasting Treaty.

www.public-domain.org

World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)

Based in London, WACC supports media reform worldwide. WACC's key concerns are media diversity, equal and affordable access to communication and knowledge, media and gender justice, and the relationship between communication and power. It tackles these through advoca-

cy, education, training, and the creation and sharing of knowledge. WACC offers professional guidance on communication policies, interprets developments in global communications, and discusses the consequences that such developments have for churches and communities everywhere, especially in the south. Its website features short articles on issues such as communication rights, intellectual property rights, media and development, media and gender, and updates on conditions in many parts of the world.
www.wacc.org.uk

World Social Forum (WSF)

The first meetings of the WSF were held in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Since then the

WSF has become a center for international dialogue and action on social justice – from sustainable development and gender equality, to peace and defense of the environment. The WSF organizers describe it as “an open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital, or by any form of imperialism, come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences freely, and network for effective action.” Some planning for the WSIS by civil society organizations took place at the WSF previous to the summit meetings.
forumsocialmundial.org

Documents from the WSIS

Geneva Declaration of Principles: Building the Information Society: a Global Challenge in the new Millennium (2003)

The Declaration of Principles begins:

“We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 for the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the

Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

The goals expressed in the Declaration of Principles are quite lofty – seeking to overcome the great inequalities in access to information and communication technologies across the world, both between rich and poor nations, as well as within countries, particularly targeting women, youth, the poor and otherwise marginalized. These technologies are not seen as ends in themselves, but as ways to promote development, eradicate poverty, provide universal primary education and overall, to attain “a more peaceful, just and prosperous world.”

View the entire Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action at www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html

Community Media and the Information Society; Statement on the Draft Declaration and Action Plan (2003)

The statement and action plan were drafted by community media NGOs in an attempt to influence the final statements of the Geneva WSIS meetings. The group called for the Declaration of Principles to include reference to the specific and crucial role of community media and for the

Plan of Action to strengthen commitment to community broadcasting in country level legislation, to spectrum allocation for community broadcasting and to support the establishment of an international Community Media Fund. Their efforts were only partly successful.

Archived by AMARC at documents.amarc.org/files/2003-09-26/CM_statement_on_WSIS_declaration_and_action_plan.pdf

Geneva Plan of Action (2003)

The Plan of Action is an outline to guide activities to implement the Geneva Principles (above); This plan was further elaborated and concretized during the Tunis meetings and its resulting documents. The plan, like the principles, recognizes that many stakeholders will have roles in the process of building an “Information Society”: governments, the private sector, civil society, and international and regional institutions, including financial institutions.

The plan suggested national targets to be achieved by 2015; these were the basis for the “line of action” or implementation plans elaborated in 2005 in Tunis. The first goals are to connect all educational, cultural, health and government institutions to Information Communication Technology (ICT) networks, as well as provide access to villages [local populations] through community access points. School curricula should prepare children for “The Information Society”; it should

be possible to use all the world’s languages on the internet; and, in an echo of the MacBride Commission report of more than 25 years ago, the plan calls for “all of the world’s population have access to television and radio services,” and that more than half have access to ICTs by the target date of 2015.

Most relevant for us as community media workers, the plan calls for “governments and other stakeholders to establish “sustainable multi-purpose community public access points, providing affordable or free-of-charge access for their citizens to the various communication resources, notably the internet.”

The plan asks the U.N. Secretary General to establish a Working Group in Internet Governance, but drops the weak call in the principles for an international fund to support efforts to reduce the inequalities in access to ICTs which this plan seeks to address.

Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (2005)

The Tunis Commitment reaffirmed the goals outlined in the Geneva documents – the “desire and commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society.” It urged governments to use information and communication technologies to make the working of governments more accessible to their citizens, and to promote measures to end the “digital divide” and provide “universal, ubiquitous, equitable and affordable access” to these technologies. The signers of this document committed to pay special attention to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups of people, including migrants, refugees and the poor, and to women, children, youth and older people. To do this, they pledged to work in partnership with all the stakeholders represented at the WSIS – governments, corporations, civil society, and international organizations.

The Tunis Agenda focused on funding mechanisms to achieve the goals and commitments of the WSIS meetings. While noting that a number of areas needed more resources, including infrastructure, training, and integration into health, education, and other programs to support poverty reduction, the “Digital Solidarity Fund,” designed to support these efforts remained voluntary. The Tunis Agenda also called for international oversight of the internet, with “the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations,” and called for the U.N. Secretary General, to convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The Agenda also called for national and international levels of follow up to implement these goals.

Since then, regional and national meetings have taken place to further the work on these issues.

View the entire Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action at www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=1161%7C1160

View the Tunis Commitment and Agenda at www.itu.int/wsis/documents/index2.html

D. Following up on the WSIS

DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS are coordinating the different areas of the WSIS plans for bringing all of the world into what they called the “Knowledge Society.” You can read reports of work so far, contact facilitators of working groups on various “action lines,” and find out what meetings are coming up on the websites below. In addition to the consultations of the working groups, there has been active follow up work on two issues debated at the WSIS meetings – intellectual property rights and regulation of the internet. In addition, UNESCO and ITU pledged more funding for community media centers. **CMR**

More sources for Following Up

- On **intellectual property rights**, a WIPO committee debated access to the “public domain” – which information should be available to the public without copyright protection, and how. An Electronic Frontier Foundation blog noted that a broad public domain “is essential for ensuring access to knowledge, and provides the foundation for technological innovation” (www.eff.org/deeplinks/archives/004434.php). Also, WIPO considered an International Broadcast Treaty, which attracted criticism because it would allow broadcasters to take materials now in the public domain and gain copyright control simply by re-broadcasting them. www.publicknowledge.org/articles/59
- On **internet governance**, a U.N.-sponsored forum which included representatives from business, government and civil society, continuing the “multi-stakeholder” approach of the WSIS, allowed the participants to express their different perspectives and plan further meetings. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Commerce ignored a new “Joint Project Agreement” which allowed ICANN, a California nonprofit, to continue as an autonomous global governance authority, with the responsibility to assign internet domain names (such as the .com, .org, .gov categories) and other regulatory responsibilities. The Commerce Department announced it would control the “.com” assignments. These are licenses that businesses pay for, and they represent 40% of the global market in domain names. See internetgovernance.org/news.html#ICANNVeriSignSettlement_113006
- For a summary report of follow up in 2005-06, as well as speeches and presentations, see www.itu.int/ws/implementation/consultation24feb.html
- To trace the follow up meetings scheduled on the different issues, or read reports of these meetings through the civil society bureau, see www.csbureau.info/posttunis.htm
- For more background and access to all archived information about the meetings, see www.itu.int/ws/basic/index.html

“We envision societies where human knowledge, creativity, cooperation and solidarity are considered core elements; where not only individual creativity, but also collective innovation, based on cooperative work are promoted. Societies where knowledge, information and communication resources are recognised and protected as the common heritage of humankind; societies that guarantee and foster cultural and linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue, in environments that are free from discrimination, violence and hatred.”

*from Community Media and the Information Society;
Statement on the Draft Declaration and Action Plan (2003)*

Section II. Global Grassroots Media: Involving People in Media Making and Media Policy

IN SECTION I, we examined the history that has led to the creation of a policy and regulatory framework for international grassroots media. It is important to understand this larger framework in order to understand the context in which grassroots media thrives (or doesn't) around the globe.

In Section II, we focus on passionate grassroots media efforts – in Northern Ireland, South Korea, Latin America, and elsewhere – and how they are involving ordinary people in some extraordinary media making, and ensuring people are part of the process of media policy development.

Marilyn Hyndman describes how commitment and perseverance led to the creation of a community television station in Belfast. Cable access practitioners in the United States will recognize many similarities in their missions, struggles, challenges and successes.

Myoungjoon Kim documents the social movement in South Korea that is leading to a more democratic media

system. He describes the policy, funding and practical aspects of public access television in South Korea, while pointing out that the internet is an increasingly exiting venue for media and activism going forward.

Peter Mitchell of Seattle's 911 Media Arts Center participates in a cross-cultural media exchange with practitioners from both the U.S. and abroad, and Patrik Angstrom Poore takes readers on a failed journey to South America to create a decentralized international news agency which led to unexpected result.

Maria Pia Matta describes radio as the communications platform that empowers people to better exercise their human rights, and makes a strong case for involving people in the creation of communications policies with a strong human rights perspective.

Finally, Dare Dukes describes how youth from New York City, under the leadership of the Global Action Project, are making media about global events and helping to shape media policy in countries around the world. **cMr**

Community Television – Getting There

by Marilyn Hyndman

Marilyn Hyndman is Programmes Director at Northern Visions/NvTv, community television for Belfast, Northern Ireland.

www.nvtv.co.uk

NORTHERN VISIONS, Belfast's access media centre, evolved over a thirty year period. It grew from a number of loose associations in the film, video, and arts collective movements of the '70s. During those thirty years, every platform for media arts and literacy has been embarked upon, including documentaries, shorts, experimental and fiction films, children's and young people's videos, animation, radio broadcasting, artists' and music videos. In all cases, we offered access to media resources and myriad production training opportunities. However, the distribution of independently-made media was ineffective and disappointing.

The ITC (the UK's broadcasting regulator) announced that licenses for local television broadcasting would be available. We

saw a broadcasting license as an opportunity to reach a wider audience. Everyone viewed television as the most powerful means of communication ever devised, so why couldn't this amazing tool be at the disposal of those who wanted to make their own programmes? Why couldn't television be a genuine two-way communication venue, and as accessible as pen and paper? It also seemed a natural progression in our development.

We applied for a license, and were successful! But, this was only the first step.

National and regional television in Ireland is a crowded environment with tight schedules and agendas. Broadcast television's need to appeal to a mass audience to justify the license fee or uphold shareholder profits had not proved a favourable environment for 'community' type programming. And, despite the fact that cable and satellite television offer numerous channels and greater choice, there was little or no provision for local com-



Belvoir Age Concern participants on heritage project

munity broadcasting there either. The challenge, therefore, of finding a viable avenue for the distribution of community programming was often left to the producer or filmmaker.

So could *we* become a full-fledged broadcaster? We took the plunge, bought the transmitter and antenna, and on February 9, 2004, the city's local television station, NvTv, began broadcasting to greater Belfast.

The transmission site we were originally provided was atop a mountain and fraught with problems. Unexpected help came from a community further down the mountain who offered us an alternative site for our transmitter. While this provided us with weakened reception, it had an unexpected advantage. This community was considered one of the most socially deprived in the city. In return for use of their premises and 24-hour security, Northern Visions would work with the community to deliver a series of documentaries about their culture and heritage, the social issues they faced and their achievements. This proved a highly fruitful partnership, resulting in some of the station's most insightful programmes, from a community which was both discontented and wary of how they were portrayed by national and regional television.

We had other challenges, too. Traditionally, a one-hour documentary on mainstream television costs around £80,000. We would never have those kind of resources; how would community television work? In our application to the ITC for the license, we had been careful not to be overly ambitious.

NvTv began by broadcasting one hour of original local programming each day, repeated throughout the day, with a compilation of the week's broadcasts re-played over the weekend. This was an enormous step, given that we had never produced one hour of television a day!

Northern Visions' aim was to enable community groups and individuals in the city to be seen and heard through the making and broadcasting of programmes that directly reflected their lives and views. In keeping with a community media ethos, we began developing our own

processes for producing programmes.

For example, during the preceding eighteen months, we had operated the Access Radio pilot, NVR 100.6FM. We helped a number of volunteer radio programme makers make the leap from radio to local television, and we continued to build on this. A volunteering scheme was established which proved so popular that it had to be suspended after more than 100 people signed up!

We also found that encouraging volunteers to focus on ideas for programming was the most productive way forward. It helped stir their creativity and gave purpose to their training. Too, given that those who volunteer are socially aware and feel a civic responsibility, our volunteers helped others who were working to improve our community through the arts and culture, charities, urban regeneration, or social and community development.

Next, we set about creating a team of community television journalists, trained to do everything from research, to camera and sound, to post production. Being multi-skilled meant that the journalists could work as a team, or independently. They could also work with groups in the community. Several initiatives grew from this process, including an ethnic minority programme series which was eventually funded by the local authority. A similar process was initiated for young people in disadvantaged areas, who made programming which explored diverse subjects. All of these efforts lead to a number of young people going on to set up their own business, find employment in the production industry, or move on to further education.

In our assessment of community need, we conducted a survey and learned that many community groups' previous experience with television had been unsatisfactory. While some had managed to achieve a two-minute public service announcement, most had to settle for a sound bite



Melissa, Linzi, Amy, Robyn, Michelle, & Jaz-Shankill Road participants on IMPACT youth training



Deepak, Vishal and Vishnu – youth training participants

in a news report, or even faced the prospect of paying for an advertisement in order to get exposure. Certainly, their ability to create real programming that covered topics in detail was very limited, if not non-existent.

At Northern Visions, it has taken time and patience to re-educate hard-pressed community groups that local television is a forum for their use and that they should make the time and resources available to learn how to use it. We have shown them that communities don't have to be isolated and marginalised anymore because a powerful forum now exists, and this forum actively seeks their involvement. This forum is there to connect local communities. Its programmes are seen by thousands of people, its work is recognised, valued and commented upon. These kinds of opportunities are especially appealing to groups who have had little to no presence on television, especially groups representing people with disabilities or those from ethnic minorities.

Identifying financial support for community media in Northern Ireland is difficult. Northern Visions survives on

funds raised from corporate-sponsored projects together with a cocktail of public and philanthropic funds. The majority of those funds is not even directly related to film and television production, but to media literacy, training and urban regeneration. It is a huge challenge, and particularly frustrating as we compare our challenges with television projects in the South of Ireland. There, they will soon have three local television channels for the Dublin area alone, and will enjoy financial assistance for community filmmaking from a broadcasting fund of £12 million.

There is still so much more that could be achieved. Thankfully, the battle is no longer about capturing the public's imagination, for any mention of community television now triggers immediate excitement. The battle today is with government decision makers who hold the purse strings. All the existing licensees in Northern Ireland, including our own, remain in effect through 2012 (the deadline for the digital switchover). When the time is right, we will begin our campaign to ensure that, going forward, a portion of the digital spectrum is allocated for local community use, and ensure that community programming remain a viable resource for all. **CMR**

Expanding Public Media Space and Media Activism In Korea

by Myoungjoon Kim

Myoungjoon Kim is the co-founder and director of the MediACT center (www.mediact.org/web/eng/eng01.php). He is also founder of Labor News Production, a labor video training center that produces films on the Democratic Labor Movement in South Korea. Myoungjoon can be reached at mjkim@mediact.org

THE SOUTH KOREAN media industry had begun to grow in earnest in the 1960s. It was characterized by a state monopoly of the broadcasting system and state censorship of films. The dictatorship that emerged in 1980, with the bloody suppression of the Gwangju Uprising, maintained state control over media. These efforts established the media industry as largely an industry of entertainment through a "three Ss" policy – sports, screen, and sex.

In the latter half of the 1980s, as a progressive mass movement for democracy

began to gather strength, efforts to overcome the existing media environment developed into four social movements for democratic media, and have continued to grow and expand since: (1) alternative and independent film and video production; (2) a citizen's critical media monitoring movement; (3) a trade union movement in the media industry; and (4) internet media activism including both the use of the internet for social change and internet democracy advocacy.

One of the most important results of this activism for democratizing the media

structure was the introduction of public access legislation when the new Broadcasting Act was passed in 2000. This legislation included the requirement that The Korean Broadcasting System broadcast viewer-produced programs, and, additionally, that cable and satellite operators broadcast programs produced by the public via a regional channel or a public access channel. Finally, the law created a fund to support these productions.

As a result of this legislation, various access structures and policies were realized.

First, national public broadcaster KBS airs a 30-minute slot called "Open Channel" on Saturday afternoons. Second, local cable channels became relatively open spaces where local citizens can show their own programs. Third, when new satellite operators get their licenses, one of the conditions is to create an access channel run by a nonprofit organization. Also, a new channel called RTV is actively supporting public access programming, and it will be a must-carry channel beginning in 2007 on all cable systems.

In addition to these openings for the public in the television infrastructure, since 2004, community radio has emerged through a system of test licenses. (A new policy of issuing the licenses for low power community radio stations was introduced by the Broadcasting Commission, and a law for legalizing community radio will soon be introduced, which will strengthen local democracy.)

In short, Korea has become a very rare example of a country where public access to terrestrial, cable and satellite channels has become a reality. This commitment also includes a funding mechanism for access programming.

Generally, the movement supporting public access has occurred in three stages. The first stage was the fight for the introduction of public access through media activism before 1999. The second stage was the fight for extending this media

space, securing funding and integrating public access more broadly into public media policy. This included establishing local media centers, introducing media education in and out of schools, lobbying for detailed policies regarding public access, and training and organizing local media activists into a national media activist network. The third and current stage is to clarify the framework of public access on every level and empower people to make this a strong space for democracy and self-expression, especially with the expectation of new neo-liberal trade and media policies.

With the advent and growth of digital video, access to the means of video production has grown, and training programs to utilize such means provided by independent groups have nurtured increasing numbers of independent activists.

These activists, in turn, have diversified, forming workers' video collectives within trade unions, becoming video activists in civic groups, and so on.

The internet has come fully into play, and has become a battle ground, where opinions that will shape the future of the internet clash over a variety of issues including censorship, security, intellectual property rights, spam mail and governance.

At the same time, the internet has become an exciting new means and space for information sharing, communication and organization. Diverse new media – ranging from independent media such as Jinbonet, to alternative journalism such as Ohmynews – continue to emerge. And as was witnessed through the candlelight march in front of the American Embassy condemning U.S. Army atrocities in Ko-

“The internet has become an exciting new means and space for information sharing, communication and organization ... broadband internet offers an alternative means of spreading visual content, thereby accelerating the convergence and expansion process of the media movement.”

OhmyNews

OhmyNews is a South Korean collaborative, online newspaper that has grown to become the world's largest "citizen journalism" site. Founded in February 2000 by Oh Yeon Ho, OhmyNews considers itself a "news guerilla organization" and its motto is "Every Citizen is a Reporter."

About 20% of the site's content is written by the 55-person staff, while the remainder and vast majority of articles is written by other freelance contributors who are mostly ordinary citizens. There are tens of thousands of registered reporters who file hundreds of articles a day.

Anybody may go to the OhmyNews site and register to become a citizen reporter. All citizen reporters are required to abide by a strict Code of Ethics and sign a citizen reporter agreement. Reporters may earn money if their story moves into the top stories of the day.

english.ohmynews.com.



RTV's bi-weekly access program, worker-produced by Labor News Production



Photos from a MediACT workshop on media activism by people with disabilities

rea, spontaneous organization and mobilization of the masses through the internet poses a threat to mainstream media and forms a new political landscape. In addition, broadband internet offers an alternative means of spreading visual content, thereby accelerating the convergence and expansion process of the media movement.

This is still a struggle, because the concept of public access is not very well-known among ordinary citizens, and the support for Neoliberal policies in the government and bureaucracy is so strong. The Free Trade Agreement between the U.S. and Korea, now being negotiated, will seriously undermine the basis of public access policy, not only for Korea but

also for the U.S.

Still, there has been significant progress toward democratic media policy, and new local media centers for production and media activism such as MediACT (see next article) are under construction in various cities. In addition, media activists continue to fight, research and produce; our national media activist network already includes hundreds of organizations in 18 different cities. In short, the future for public access and media democracy has strong potential but is not yet determined. Questions and challenges remain, such as: How can we build solidarity between various social movements and media activists? How can we build a new concept of the public interest? How can we develop these new concepts and policies where the Neoliberal ideas are increasingly prevalent? **cMr**

East Meets West Meets East: Community Media, Seoul Style!

by Peter Mitchell

Peter Mitchell was the Communications Director and Screenings Curator for of 911 Media Arts Center in Seattle from 1995 - 2005.

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The article is excerpted from an article which originally appeared on the 911 Media Arts Center website. The full article is available online at www.911media.org/about/community/location_winter03.html

Thanks to Peter Mitchell for allowing us to reprint excerpts from this article.

EVERYDAY OCCURRENCES can lead to extraordinary events. For instance, not long ago a polite gentleman visited 911 Media Arts Center and asked me for a tour. This isn't unusual; giving tours is part of my job. However, I was surprised to learn he was the director of a brand new media center in South Korea called MediACT. I proceeded to show him every last detail of our center and he dutifully captured it all on video. After exchanging cards, I forgot about the incident until I received an email from MJ Kim a few months later. He invited me, expenses paid, to speak at a community media seminar in Seoul. I guess my tour impressed him!

Sleep deprived and feeling dense from airline food, I arrived in downtown Seoul. Massive video billboards and flickering neon compounded my disorientation. Fortunately, I managed to find MediACT and was warmly greeted. Their media center was highly organized and antiseptically clean; I didn't see a single loose cable or dust bunny anywhere. I was instructed to

remove my shoes and don a pair of MediACT slippers. I shuffled over to an AVID DV suite, a DigiBeta tape room, and a gorgeous recording studio. Inside the equipment cage, gear cases lined the walls like gemstones. MediACT had loads of brand new production equipment including XL-1 and JVC DY-700 cameras, shotgun and wireless mics, light kits, tripods, DAT decks and portable mixers. Interestingly, MediACT chose to go mostly with Windows and Premiere for their six offline-edit systems. I'm sure this reduced their start up cost. However, I'd venture that support cost will be higher down the road. I was really impressed that everything was totally high tech, the edit suites were card-key accessible 24 hours a day and the bathroom had automatic flush toilets. The MediACT center is completely in the digital era – no capture cards, forget about 3/4" tape, and (sniff) goodbye Video Toaster.

At the seminar we relied on professional interpreters to facilitate communications. Everyone wore a headset and spoke

through a microphone. I felt like I was addressing the UN general assembly. My corny jokes provoked a delayed laugh as the interpreters struggled to translate. I was one of four panelists including Dirk Koning from Grand Rapids Community Media Center in Michigan; Jurgen Linke from Berlin Open Channel in Germany; and Marilyn Hyndman of Northern Visions in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Much of our discussion focused on access and education. MediACT appeared to be defining itself as a training center for media activists. This is greatly needed in South Korea. Alternative viewpoints are just emerging on topics like globalization, privatization and division from the North. In the right context, media arts provide a healthy jumping off point for dialogue. Stimulating creativity builds community.

On Saturday night, our group attended a massive union rally. The MediACT center sponsors a labor film festival and is well connected with the union movement. I'm curious if MediACT has a political charter and, if so, what the long-term effect may be on the group. Will it strengthen or hinder their role in the community?

Seoul has all of the elements for a rich media culture – a good university, high bandwidth penetration, and a technically skilled population. MediACT could provide physical space for Seoul's independent media community to meet. Additionally, they have demonstrated a model for media centers in other parts of the country to duplicate. Networks are just beginning to form among the South Korean independent media community. In a few years, they should be vigorous.

We wrapped up our seminar by discussing the daily challenges faced by community media centers. Although the other panelists were from around the world, we all confronted similar issues. Hopefully, MediACT will learn from everyone else's mistakes. MediACT may be just starting out, but they have laid excellent groundwork for the future. **cMr**



Peter Mitchell at a union rally in Seoul, Korea

My Travels in Latin America

by Patrik Angstrom Poore

THE INDIAN AND THE GRINGO

The Indian and the Gringo had a plan: they would visit community radio stations all over so-called "Latin America." They would produce a documentary for radio in Spanish with the help of local media outlets, simultaneously building relationships and gathering voices to tell a dozen different stories about communities in the global south, and the issues that affect them. Later, they would translate that documentary into English, and distribute it along the community radio network that they'd just created, and use that to inspire others to do the same thing.

These relationships would be the skeleton of an international media solidarity network, a web of relationships for moving information and resources. Maybe someday a decentralized international

news agency, flying under the big media radar, amplifying voices at the grassroots level. To educate North Americans about other varieties of democracy available, and provide the tools to the creators of these democracies to do that educating with their own voices.

They raised some money. KBOO Radio in Portland, Oregon kicked in \$2,500 of an unused travel fund from that year's budget. They wrote a grant to Funding Exchange – the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media – for \$5,000. The Gringo raised \$1,000 in contributions from his colleagues at the Multnomah County Health Department. Pacifica, AMARC and the NFCB provided contacts throughout the Americas to help determine a rough itinerary. With a friendship spanning several years and phases, and experience working

Visit Patrik Angstrom Poore's blog of his work in Latinized America at www.oirnos.blogspot.com

"The Revolution Inside: A Venezuelan Radio Essay" is available free to non-commercial radio stations that agree to air it. Spanish or English, 5 parts, approximately 28 minutes each with intro and credits. Email Patrik at hearusnow@gmail.com

Listen online to "The Revolution Inside" at www.kboo.fm/taxonomy/term/25

together on bilingual radio, they were as ready as they might be.

The discussions about privilege became more frequent. As they moved south from Tucson, crossing into Mexico on October 2, 2005, the discussions became disagreements lasting hours, and then became an almost daily occurrence. They questioned whether interviewing poor people, whatever the intentions, wasn't merely using them for an abstract project. They needed jobs, health care, water. They needed systemic change, release from the policies of the U.S. Government – policies which play a role in any suffering in Latinized America. Policies which

play a role in the disproportionate luxury that 5 to 20 percent of each country's population enjoys. They wondered whether truly balanced relationships could even develop in a context of such imbalanced privilege, or whether bringing fancy equipment and resources would only reinforce the script of North American superiority. They wondered whether networks between community media in the global North and the global South would just make it easier for other gringos to go on holiday and spread their influence in more remote corners. After all, it wasn't getting any easier for people in the global South to get tourist visas to the U.S.

Finally, they received word they got the grant. But, the Indian declined to participate on moral grounds. They split the money and the equipment in El Salvador, and the Gringo flew to Venezuela to teach English as an illegal immigrant. It was Thanksgiving in the U.S.

The Gringo goes to Venezuela

The Gringo's Spanish skills were weak, and he wasn't sure what to do. He wasn't sure he should be trying to do media organizing in Latin America at all. Besides, there was no way he could accomplish the scope of the original project on his own. The Foundation might not even ac-

cept the news. He was teaching English to businessmen and employees of automobile companies who hated Chavez and dreamed of living in the U.S. It is possible that hell is simply whatever you do not want it to be.

In the homes of Venezuelans, the baby Jesus came and went. Frosty the Snowman, also, came and went, which was a bit strange since snow is rare in the jungle.

The World Social Forum comes to Caracas

The World Social Forum came to Caracas, bringing people with enough money to travel, including friends from Portland. Lots of North Americans came and some complained that they didn't understand Spanish. Some brought LPFM equipment and built radios. Chavez called Bush "Mr. Danger," and he called Cindy Sheehan "Mrs. Hope."

Joining the radio movement

After more than a month sleeping in hotels that rent rooms by the hour, the Gringo made friends with one of these budding radio stations in the Caracas barrio of La Dolorita.

He also got a job in the translation department of the Central University of Venezuela. Funding Exchange agreed to the new budget proposal, and the family he was staying with agreed to help create the documentary. But now, it would be only about Venezuela.

He paid translators from UCV and his housemates to help arrange and conduct interviews.

He paid for them to travel around Venezuela – to the oil fields of the east, the plains in the south, the mountains in the west.

The Gringo slept in the radio station, in a loft above his hosts' house.

He spent evenings downloading audio onto a computer purchased with the salary paid to his collaborators. Radio Perola, Radio Activa, Radio Sendero, Radio Pueblo Nuevo, Radio Negro Primero, Colectivo Radiofonica de Petare and more – presente! Radialistas met each other and worked together for the first time.



The Gringo paid translators from UCV and his housemates to help arrange and conduct interviews

Moving On

On May 1, 2006, hundreds of thousands marched in the U.S. for immigration reform. On May 5th, the Gringo left Venezuela. A group had formed in Portland called the Bolivarian Media Exchange, intending to bring information and people from the global South to the global North, and to send media equipment back with them.

The Gringo's Venezuelan documentary was aired in English in 5 parts, in August 2006. "Democracy Now!" began angling to air their Spanish language headlines on

community radio stations throughout the Americas as a method of developing relationships between community radios. In Caracas, some of the radialistas with whom the Gringo had worked began to plan a training to produce news stories for FSRN. This is not the end, and whether it is happy is a matter of interpretation. **cMR**



The Gringo spent evenings downloading audio onto a computer purchased with the salary paid to his collaborators

Community Radio Policy in Latin America: Communities are the Key Ingredient

by *María Pía Matta*

THE COMMUNITY RADIO MOVEMENT has a rich and storied history both across the continent and around the world.

I am speaking here of hundreds of radio stations engaged in a mission to put the tools of communication back into the hands of the people, so that members of civil society can communicate with one another in a forum that is radically different – in both purpose and motive – than either commercial radio or radio with a political or religious message.

In Latin America, no state has ever drafted communications legislation – relating to telecommunications, radio or television – from a human rights perspective. As a result, corporate interests continue to drive the economic and technological agenda when it comes to regulatory policy for media communications.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNESCO are just two of several international organizations to recognize that the radio spectrum belongs in the public domain. The global citizen should benefit and profit from the use of public frequencies just as he does from the air, oceans and ozone layer. Like these, radio spectrum is a world heritage resource.

It is essential to engage civil society in

the task of drafting community oriented communications policies. In order to ensure an equitable distribution of radio band spectrum, telecommunications organizations must remain free from interference by government and, more importantly, economic interests.

In turn, the current high priority of World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) is the strategic promotion of the third sector of broadcasting. Since there is space on the spectrum for both profit-oriented commercial transmitters and state-run media outlets seeking political profit, there must also be bandwidth made available for radio and television that seeks neither profit nor propaganda. Instead, the latter would promote: (1) citizenship; (2) the exercising of civic rights and fulfillment of civic duties; (3) consensus-building in support of worthy causes; and (4) an improved quality of life for the general public.

Community radio and its various networks provide a powerful legitimizing force to communities. Incorporating new technologies will lead to improved services and greater community engagement. It will open the door to a communications strategy that empowers people to better exercise their human rights. **cMR**

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Thanks to AMARC for allowing us to reprint excerpts from this article.

www.amarc.org

Global Voices: Making Another World Possible

by *Dare Dukes*

Dare Dukes is development director of Global Action Project.

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To learn more about Global Action Project, see samples of youth-produced media, or to request videos for screenings, please visit G.A.P.'s Web site at www.global-action.org. Global Voices was generously supported in part with funds from the Puffin Foundation and Leveraging Investments in Creativity.

SINCE ITS FOUNDING IN 1991, Global Action Project (G.A.P.), based in New York City, has engaged young people all over the world in a collaborative process of making media to address the complex social issues that shape their lives and communities. For over 15 years, G.A.P. has supported thousands of youth producing media that helped them understand links between local and global events and topics that are not often covered by the mainstream media.

Co-founding director Diana Coryat explains, "We asked ourselves, how much do young people know about each other's daily lives and the problems and challenges they confront?" Recognizing that young people in the U.S. rarely have the chance to hear the perspectives of their peers, especially those in other countries, G.A.P. created programs that supported youth producing meaningful work that linked local issues to global realities. G.A.P.'s active video library now contains more than 100 pieces of youth-made media on critical and timely topics such as immigration, community health, popular culture, education, juvenile justice, human rights, and HIV/AIDS awareness. Many of these works have been screened, shared, debated and honored worldwide.

Reaffirming global roots

G.A.P.'s program for international cultural exchanges and other global activities is Global Voices. Among other forces, recent world events necessitated a shift in Global Voices's focus. Program youths expressed frustration in trying to understand the

U.S. invasion of Iraq. At the same time, they were eager to apply their skills as media makers to explore the subject's complexity and capture their fresh – and unrepresented – perspectives. In response, G.A.P. pulled together a team of youths and adult staff members to attend the 2005 World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

One of the most significant civil and political initiatives of the past several decades, the WSF is a large annual international gathering of civil society activists, with attendees from over 100 countries. Conceived of as a people's alternative to the World Economic Forum, the WSF is an open space for discussing and challenging the effects of neo-liberal policies, enabling activists, social theorists, artists and others from around the world to meet and strategize for creating a more humane global landscape.

Using the credo of the Forum – "another world is possible" – as a springboard for investigation, the G.A.P. youth crew decided to make a video, posing this question to young international activists they would meet at the WSF.

After weeks of technical and logistical preparation and in-depth study of the Forum's history and context, the delegation headed to Brazil, where they lived with host families and spent every day shooting, presenting, interviewing, witnessing, connecting with cultural and political organizations, participating in workshops, and learning. When they returned, they created "Notes from Porto Alegre," a documentary aimed at youth aged 12-20. The work is a moving portrait of their journey and the ideas of people from across the globe about envisioning a better world. Everyone involved agrees that the experience transformed them.

Expanding the circle of learning

As with all videos produced at G.A.P., "Notes from Porto Alegre" became the centerpiece of an education campaign. Together, the youths and staff members developed a workshop for their video that helped young audiences explore the ideas raised by the documentary. They held screenings, solicited feedback from viewers, presented on panels, and advised G.A.P. about ways of integrating the international relationships formed at the WSF into program curriculum. For example, they hosted a community meeting and coupled a screening with interactive exercises that helped participants



G.A.P. youth media-makers Anthony and Karina at the World Social Forum in Caracas, Venezuela, 2006

identify the links between their personal lives, international events, and the complex issues underlying these links – such as reliance on fossil fuels, and the unsettling connections between corporate interests and military activity. Groups far and wide are now using “Notes from Porto Alegre” to help organize this year’s regional WSF in Puerto Rico.

The experience in Brazil had a powerful impact on G.A.P. youth, programs, and staff. And demand for the video proved the dearth of information from young people’s perspectives about this major world movement. G.A.P. decided to send a team of youths and staff members to the 2006 WSF, in Caracas, Venezuela.

Intensive preparation for the trip included group discussions, readings, research and production planning – from an introduction to South American history to Spanish language review, from watching films about Venezuela to discussing the role of U.S. media artists at the WSF and in other global situations. Reaching out to more than 50 groups from the U.S., Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Puerto Rico, among others, the Global Voices crew began fostering new links and audiences for their screenings and workshops as part of the Forum’s “Communication, Cultures and Education” track.

The trip once again included shooting a documentary, this time on the host country itself. Recent dramatic political changes and a flourishing alternative media made Venezuela a compelling subject for a video. Adult staff members mentored youths, training them in technical aspects of media making. But creatively, the team worked together as equal collaborators, regardless of age. They shot 25 hours of footage in a variety of formats, interviewing dozens of people about the Chavez administration, visiting community media organizations (a printing press, radio stations, a video collective, and a communications school), participating in the WSF marches and events, and production meetings.

Shooting a documentary was only part of the crew’s activities. G.A.P. youths also hosted a three-hour workshop – which included a screening of “Notes from Porto Alegre” – participated in a panel discus-

sion about media making and popular education, and joined in two live radio broadcasts. The radio exchanges were some of the most exciting activities for the group as they discussed everything from mainstream media to electoral politics to Latino identity in the U.S.

Impact

In addition to the videos produced and the educational workshops and outreach that surrounds them, the trip to Caracas resulted in several meaningful relationships with international organizations, many of them community media groups. Of these contacts, G.A.P. has already hosted one international media maker, and screened his work to staff and youth, and maintained contact with others for potential future exchanges and collaborations.

G.A.P.’s work at the World Social Forums has been very significant, both for the youths and staff members who went, as well as for G.A.P. as an organization. There has been a palpable shift in the G.A.P. community since the trips, as was evident during a recent organizational planning retreat when it was generally agreed that these real global connections should deeply inform curriculum. In addition to renewing the commitment to attending the World Social Forum both as participants and community media makers, staff members proposed a variety of other media-based cultural exchanges.

The Global Voices has without a doubt broadened G.A.P.’s horizon, creating new paths to international work, fresh ideas for infusing curriculum with global perspectives, and invaluable face-to-face experiences for youth and their international peers. It makes using media for dialogue and social change a reality and suggests that maybe another world is possible. **CMR**



G.A.P. youth media-makers Gentile and Mongo at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2005



G.A.P. youth media-makers Gentile, Mongo, and Lenah at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2005

Section III. Connections: U.S. and International Community Media

IN GLOBAL MEDIA POLICY CIRCLES, as pointed out in Section I, community-based media is seen as a fundamental aspect of community life. Lack of communication, information and education are isolating, and the social marginalization that comes from isolation is profound and destructive. The articles in Section III underscore the use of media in bringing about social parity and civic health, and affirm how media is a basic component of community infrastructure. This is an inspiring vision, and one that ought to resonate with community media practitioners in the U.S., not to mention policy makers and funders.

The stories here also make the point that appropriate technology is key. The recommendations coming out of the International Telecommunications Union is to form a global network of community media centers, and that those centers use the media most available and effective – often radio and internet. Community media – television, radio, internet, web – offers a substantial resource for community building, and, when appropriately applied, serves well the mission of community media.


Max Graef and Molly Talcott write about how RadioActive worked to build radio stations in Oaxaca, Mexico. They raised funds, acquired equipment, and taught local kids, women, and others to operate equipment and make programming. They conducted workshops to identify local problems and issues and taught people how radio could help bring those issues to the fore and foster

knowledge and debate.

WORT radio in Madison, Wisconsin established a sister city relationship with a town in El Salvador and shared programming as a way to teach people in each country about life in the other. Jill Hopke also shares an example of how radio was used in Santa Marta to resolve a difficult local issue.

Lyle Davies describes numerous programs at Manhattan Neighborhood Network as well as in Minneapolis-St. Paul that serve to connect refugees, immigrants and exiles both with their countries of origin, and with local American culture.

Finally, Paul Gatanga from Burlington, Vermont, talks about his project, Hope Congo. He describes the need to work with credible media to “expand the voices of the abused and powerless people of Congo.” He makes the point that democracy in the world cannot stand when economic terrorism is upheld by the international community, and commits to using media to raise consciousness.

Globally speaking, the mission of community-based media is about social change and media democracy. These articles show how information and communication are the currency of engagement, empowerment and functional democracy. The global efforts highlighted here provide inspiring stories and many lessons learned which are useful to the U.S. community media movement. 

From the Mountains of Oaxaca: RadioActive and CIPO Promote Community Radio

by Max Graef and Molly Talcott

IN DECEMBER OF 2005, two activists, Max Graef and Molly Talcott from RadioActive – an organization founded by Max – arrived in Oaxaca City, Oaxaca, Mexico to partner with CIPO-RFM (Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca – Ricardo Flores Magón, or, Popular Indigenous Council of Oaxaca) in a project to build a community radio station in a remote mountainous community. CIPO-RFM is a grassroots organization of indigenous peoples that is organized throughout 15 different communities in Oaxaca.

RadioActive works with community organisations around the world to build community radio stations. RadioActive-ists have worked in Mexico, Honduras, Palestine and Cameroon, and are off later this year to work in Madagascar and Brazil. In each place, we work with a local progressive organization that is already working hard to improve conditions for people in their respective region(s). Their radio station becomes a tool they can use to promote their message and work and foster local culture, knowledge, and debate.

To learn more about
RadioActive, visit
www.radioactive.org.uk.

RadioActive and CIPO traveled to four different mountain communities. The action plan was to visit each of the four communities and set up a temporary infrastructure for a radio station. We planned to hold workshops about radio production and broadcasting. We also facilitated discussions about the purpose and possibilities of community radio as a non-commercial, community-controlled form of media production.

RadioActive had raised enough funds – through a series of concerts and benefits held in London, England – to be able to bring one 30-watt FM transmitter, one dipole antenna, and enough studio equipment to build one radio station. Thus, for most of the communities, our visits amounted to the beginning of a conversation geared toward an eventual radio station in the local community.

The community of San Isidro Reforma, in connection with CIPO, had already been running a station for several months. The station – Radio Reforma 94.1 FM – exemplifies one of the many achievements of CIPO-RFM. The station reaches 10 communities, and a population of roughly 20,000. Radio Reforma's daily programming schedule includes a morning program run by 11-year olds, who both present and engineer the show. Every morning two different children come in to present a show on issues that affect them, such as their indigenous culture, their local environment, and what kids can do to help their community. In addition, there is a weekly women's show where village women discuss issues such as how alcoholism impacts their community, unwanted pregnancy, domestic abuse, and their struggles for women's rights. This program is having a huge impact on women who otherwise feel isolated with respect to these issues.

In a memorable workshop in Yucubey, we discussed the problems and possibilities of scheduling and carrying out a radio program, and sustaining a community-run radio station. Molly facilitated a workshop where participants were asked to imagine what a radio station schedule might look like. They were each asked to imagine what type of show they might

want to produce, and they came up with an incredible variety of show ideas, including a children's program, a sports show, a fortune-telling program, a political music show, a human rights program, a ranchera music program, local news, and so on.

At this workshop, we also grappled with the logistical issues of the "person power" involved in running a station in a community where people's workloads are already very time-consuming. This discussion revealed a profound, if challenging, lesson: While community radio stations clearly help to change the world for the better, promote media democracy, and improve the lives of people living in communities with stations, in many cases, the material conditions of "poor" people's lives need to change in order for community radio to be an effective tool, and accessible to them. This challenge seemed particularly pertinent to the lives of women, who tend to work very long days harvesting corn, shelling peas, preparing meals, and generally performing the majority of subsistence activities associated with the household.

In Oaxaca City, a broad-based popular movement (APPO, Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca, or, the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca) is currently occupying the town square and city streets in order to demand better funding for schools, depose a corrupt and repressive governor, and create a new constitution and future for Oaxaca. The APPO has taken over multiple radio and TV stations in Oaxaca City, on the basis that the government was telling lies about the movement and that APPO needed access to the airwaves in order to tell their truth(s). This movement is drawing attention to the need for a radically democratic, community-controlled media structure that enables





people to broadcast in their mother tongues, speak about social problems that they face, educate one another, and explore alternatives together.

However, we are happy to add that the community media movement, which is connected to a range of popular and indigenous movements, is widespread throughout Oaxaca – and indeed, throughout Mexico – and has been flourishing for years. Several indigenous and rural communities operate radio stations that are community-controlled. Many of these, however, do not hold official licenses and are thus vulnerable to government

closures. This problem is one that needs attention so that communities can program without fear of state-led violations of their human rights to communication, culture, and education – community radio style! We are honored to have been a small part of building media democracy in the mountains of Oaxaca. **cMr**



Videos Available About Recent Events in Oaxaca, Mexico

The following are a few video titles available for viewing on the web. The titles listed below have also been shown on Manhattan Neighborhood Network. To find these and similar videos on the web, search Free Speech TV (www.freespeech.org) and the Independent Media Center (www.indymedia.org).

"Land, Rain and Fire," a documentary by Tami Gold; 58:00 min.

Through personal testimonials, this video examines the origins of social discontent in Oaxaca and documents its transformation into a pacific democratic insurgency. What began as a teachers' strike on May 22, 2006 for better wages and more resources for students, has erupted into a massive movement for profound social change in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. "Land, Rain and Fire" tells the story of the police attack on the morning of June 14th when more than fifty thousand teachers were camped out with their children. Dozens were hospitalized. But the attack backfired as public anger transformed the strike into an unprecedented democratic insurgency, demanding the resignation of the Governor and the creation of a new constitution.

Hundreds of unions, indigenous and women's organizations, neighborhood groups, students and professional associations came together and created APPO – The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, and a massive campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience has brought the state government to a standstill.

"In the Bicentennial of Juárez"; 8:07 min., Nov/06.

Overview of the main demands and summaries of arrests and deaths that have resulted from the civic movement in Oaxaca City, including footage of confrontations with police, from the moment Governor Ulises Ruiz sends in State Police to oust the teachers' peaceful sit-in in Oaxaca on June 14, 2006, to November 2, 2006, when Federal Preventive Police enter the city.

"Victoria de Todos los Santos/The Victory of All Saint's Day"; 11:48 min., Nov/06.

Federal Preventive Police are confronted by the people of Oaxaca as they attempt to contain the civil movement. Video edited November 2, 2006, one day after the events.

"In Memoriam: tribute to Brad Will"; 8:54 min., Oct/Nov/06.

A short tribute to the life of reporter Brad Will. The people of Oaxaca remember Brad and demand justice. Dedicated to his family and showing the altar, mural, signs and prayers offered to his memory on All Saint's Day, November 1, 2006, nine days after his death.

A Transnational Sister Radio Project: WORT, Community Radio in Madison, Wisconsin, and Radio Victoria, Community Radio in Santa Marta, El Salvador

Jill Hopke of WORT and Oscar Ramirez Beltran of Radio Victoria share comments about their stations and their experiences with the sister radio project.

Building Transnational Radio Waves

by Jill Hopke

WORT is Madison, Wisconsin's community radio station, but it doesn't limit its scope to south-central Wisconsin. WORT has a sister radio station in El Salvador. This project is at the forefront of a global community radio movement to build connections between stations in North America and the global South.

Radio Victoria is one of El Salvador's first community radio stations and was founded in 1993 during the post-war period following the country's 12-year civil war.

"The community radio sister radio project means for us more support in different aspects, means more solidarity that we can contribute to. For us here in El Salvador it is also a way to know more about the United States and to share more of our history," said former Radio Victoria news director Vilma Patricia Laínez.

Radio Victoria's programming includes a daily news show, produced by youth volunteers, "En Voz Alta" ("Out Loud"). The schedule also features national and

international news, public affairs programming, and serves as an outlet for local music. The station's slogan is "100% Popular." "Popular," in Spanish, means "of the people."

The purpose of the sister radio project is to build transnational communication structures on a grassroots level, to raise awareness about our communities' common struggles for peace, justice and democracy, and to provide mutual aid and technical training. Future projects will include news story exchanges, simulcast music programs, technical assistance, and training exchanges.

WORT is currently working to secure funding and visas to bring a delegation of youth volunteers from Radio Victoria to Madison in early 2007. **cMr**

To learn more about the sister radio station project and get involved visit:

www.ennuestropatio.org
www.radiovictoria.org

"100% Popular": An Example of Radio Victoria's Community Impact

by Oscar Ramirez Beltran

HOW THE RADIO helps the communities. One example that we have from a year and a half, two years ago, is in Santa Marta. It is an example of what it means to be organized as opposed to another place that is not organized. In Santa Marta, the United States military was coordinating with the municipal government to set up a temporary open area hospital to provide free health care to the people. They wanted to set it up in the only ball field, so where would the youth have to go? The soldiers commenced without coordinating with anyone from Santa Marta, only with the municipal government here. The community said, if you want to help, give the medicine to our doctor so he can review it and decide what is good for Santa Marta; this would be helping the community.

The radio held a forum where we invited the departmental authorities, the military officials, the governor of Cabañas, the local mayor, teachers, and people from the community of Santa Marta. The forum was on the air for

three hours. We discussed what is the point of view of Santa Marta in opposition to the rest of Cabañas. People could see that it was about more than simply one hospital.

We opened the telephone lines so people could discuss the points. The proposal of the radio was if Santa Marta doesn't want the hospital, the departmental authorities should respect the community's wishes. **cMr**



Sister Radio – Radio Victoria studio

Visions of Home and Host Country: TV by Immigrants, Exiles and Refugees

by *Lyell Davies*

Lyell Davies is an Irish-born, social justice media maker, and a U.S. immigrant. He currently works with participatory media projects engaging youth, immigrant workers and the homeless in New York City.

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WHEN WE CONJURE UP an image of global media there's a tendency to think of satellites beaming Rupert Murdoch's media dynasty into Chinese towns, or of dubbed versions of Hollywood-made blockbusters screened in movie theaters in Bombay, Jakarta, Tehran, or Shanghai. Murdoch's empire and Hollywood's blockbusters are certainly features of the contemporary global "mediascape," but they are not its only feature.

Mirroring the explosion of global corporate "big" media, has been an explosion in the making and circulation of global "small" media. Today, with nearly 200 million people living outside the country in which they were born, immigrants, exiles and refugees — a vast contemporary diaspora — are a prominent feature of globalization. And wherever these diasporic peoples have traveled, they have created small media distribution and media making networks to suit their communication needs.

Examples of transnational diasporic media networks are everywhere around us. In New York City, Chinese immigrants use public access TV to re-air Chinese-made news and entertainment programs. In Minneapolis-St. Paul, Hmong refugees stay connected to their homeland by watching VHS and DVD travelogues depicting Hmong life in South East Asia. Online, stateless refugees build virtual "places" to sustain their identities. And in every American city, ethnic grocery stores are crammed with original-language rental-videotapes which allow immigrants to watch the latest film or television fare from their home country.

About 20% of people now living outside their birth nations reside in the U.S., and a glance at the program schedules at many public access TV stations reveals the presence of these diasporic communities and the small media networks they've created. Public access TV is a way "to do something to help the community; to do

something to educate the community," says Celia Navarro, co-producer of "Mexico Al Dia," a weekly show for Mexican New Yorkers airing on Manhattan's public access station — Manhattan Neighborhood Network.

"Mexico Al Dia" serves some of the functions common to diaspora-focused media: it provides Mexican immigrants with information they need to survive and prosper in America. It builds a sense of community among these immigrants, and it allows them to keep in touch with relatives still in Mexico. Navarro explains, "We provide information people need on things like tenancy, rent and eviction; we also distribute our programs in Mexico. We film people who live here, we interview them, and we send the interviews to their families. Many families have not seen each other in over twenty years, but through the distribution of our show, people are able to see each other and communicate." Navarro makes her living as a housekeeper, babysitter, and travel agency employee, but devotes as much time as she can to learning about America so she can share her knowledge with "Mexico Al Dia's" audience.

Sometimes diasporic media making becomes a way for dispersed peoples to flex their political muscle, to demand rights for themselves in a host country, or to engage in long-distance nationalism and demand political change in their birth country.

For example, Eunide Alexandre, producer of "Voice of Haiti," uses her show to empower immigrants in America. "I feel strongly there is a need to provide information to enlighten the public about immigrants. I did a show on immigration policy and I received over 100 phone calls after that show," she says. In addition however, Alexandre aims to influence the political situation in her birth country. She continues, "The type of images you see in the mainstream American media

undermines the progress of the Haitian people, it shows them as savages out to hurt each other. You don't get the full perspective. My goal is to delve in and give a better perspective, so the U.S. policies in Haiti will change."

In earlier times, Irish, Jewish, Polish, Korean, Haitian, and other exiles, immigrants, or refugees, published newspapers and printed treatises seeking to end oppression or create change in their homelands. Today, these same constituencies produce community TV, websites, DVDs, and other electronic media. Paradoxically, these diasporic media making activities can be simultaneously very local – addressing the immediate needs of a community in a particular place, and decidedly global – mapping the personal, cultural, and political connections that link the home and host countries.

On the other hand, immigrants, exiles and refugees face a variety of obstacles when it comes to making media. These may be economic or linked to limited resources and language barriers, but often there are also huge cultural barriers to overcome. When Alamelu Narayanaswamy, who grew up in a small town near Bangalore, India, first heard of public access TV she was, "stunned, I thought the person who told me about it was putting me on. In India only the rich can make TV. A lay women like me would never have the opportunity."

For Narayanaswamy, going to her local access TV center and taking classes in TV production required journeying into an unfamiliar culture and community. "When I arrived at Manhattan

Neighborhood Network, I saw people of every ethnicity in the station — Hispanic, Asian, American. I was used to one kind of person. It was my passion for making TV that got me through my initial fears." Today, Narayanaswamy's monthly-airing show, "Curry N' Spice," focuses on Indian themes some of the time, but more commonly it features dance, music and conversations reflecting the diverse ethnic experiences of life in New York City. In this instance, media making became a way of crossing the cultural divide that separated Narayanaswamy and her peers from a wider American culture. "The environment at MNN made a way for me to involve myself in life here, and I can call myself a total New Yorker now," she says.

With successful outreach and audience building, these so-called "small media" activities can play a significant role in the lives of immigrants, exiles and refugees, and ultimately play a role in shaping human, cultural and political relations transnationally. They enable a diasporic community to have continued participation in the life of the home country, and can help to counter the personal trauma and isolation experienced by many individuals following geographical or cultural displacement. They can also be used to educate members of the "host" society about the lives of immigrants or the immigrant's home culture.

Celia Navarro observes, "We don't have a set audience for 'Mexico Al Dia.' We want to inform our community about things like the rights and laws of this country, and we want all Americans to learn more about Mexico." **cMr**

Hope Congo Opens Eyes and Ears

by Paul Gatanga

"**H**OPE CONGO" is a television program produced in Burlington, Vermont which tackles the politics, socio-economic plans, and development of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). "Hope Congo" programs include documentaries and live shows, and airs on CCTV Channel 17.

The programs relate the atrocities and humanitarian calamities subsequent to the Congolese civil war. This war went on from about 1996 to 2003 and left 5 million dead. This number is higher than all the people who died in wars in the countries in the mid-east, even in the genocide in Rwanda which took 800,000 lives. But

Paul Gatanga produces "Hope Congo" with the help of Chittenden Community Television in Burlington, Vermont. Gatanga is a part-time field producer for the media center, so the show is produced irregularly.

Paul can be reached at Paul.gatanga@med.uvm.edu



Paul Gatanga (left) with Abdoul Tahirou

today, nobody is talking about the Congo; it's not on the agenda. Around the world, there is no information about what is happening there.

Some examples of our programs:

- SOS-ITURI is a documentary that depicts the atrocities committed by Rwandese and Ugandan armies in Ituri, one of the northeast Congolese districts rich in such natural resources as gold and oil.
- In collaboration with the Congolese Congress in America, "Hope Congo" aired the documentary, "Human Beings Just Like You: Genocide in the RD Congo," that relates the drastic plight of the people of the DRC, people living in a country rich in natural resources, but without effective leadership.
- The live show, "Discussing the RD Congo," was widely heard in the Congo as well as around the world, and exposed the shocking incident when President Kabila's Praetorian Guard brutally attacked the residence of his electoral challenger.

Through these and other efforts, we wish to communicate our disappointment in the international community for its indirect complicity in the drama to which the people of the DRC are subjected. We also wish to mobilize the people of the DRC so that they stand strong to denounce all abuses and claim a genuine installation of democracy in their land.

The goal of "Hope Congo" is to sensitize all Congolese living in the diaspora and all friends of the abused people of the DRC regarding the sham democratic elections led by the international community

in this massive and rich African country.

As producer, I work in partnership with the National Movement for Democracy and Federalism (NMDF), located in the United States. This organization is run by a group of experts in Congolese affairs. "Hope Congo" works with NMDF to ensure its views and positions are shared throughout the world and within the Congolese community. Congolese people residing in the United States are the primary target for "Hope Congo."

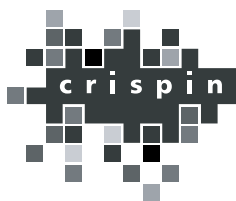
The NMDF is in need of credible media to help expand its voice and the voices of the abused and powerless people of Congo. Leaders of the international community persist in ignoring the cries of hunger and misery coming from the DRC only because of the primacy of their own interests. But a larger interest is at stake: democracy in the world cannot stand when economic terrorism is upheld by the international community. What is happening in the DRC is mindless. It is insane.

The NMDF and "Hope Congo" have opted to use audio-visual means because we believe that we can reach as many souls as possible – as far as eyes can see and ears can hear. We hope to connect with people of goodwill around us who will help communicate our efforts in different languages. Any and all support in the areas of production, post-production, duplication and broadcasting is most welcome. **cMr**



From left to right: Abraham Awolich (from Sudan), Tuipate Mubiay from Congo, and Paul Gatanga

"Hope Congo" is unusual because it aims to educate both a local audience who many know little to nothing about the Congo, and an audience of Africans in Vermont and across the U.S. who want to keep informed about the politics and development challenges in their home country. Gatanga would like to make the program available to other media centers; please contact him if you are interested.



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Media in the 21st Century: Hanging Up on Reform

Free Program Available

The half-hour program produced by Chicago Access Network Television (CAN TV) examines the telephone industry's attempt to eliminate local video franchising. Hanging Up on Reform explores the dangers of this legislation to the public, including threats to public, educational and governmental (PEG) access centers. The program was made possible with support from the Joyce Foundation.

CAN TV is providing free DVDs of the program to TV stations. E-mail contact and shipping info to gb@cantv.org. For more information visit www.cantv.org.



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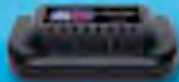
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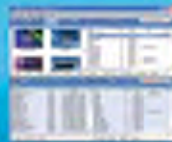
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